

TO SIAM AND MALAYA

IN

THE DUKE OF SUTHERLAND'S YACHT 'SANS PEUR'

BY

MRS. FLORENCE CADDY

AUTHOR OF

'THROUGH THE FIELDS WITH LINNÆUS,'

ETC., ETC.

IN ONE VOLUME.

LONDON:

~~W~~ATTS AND BLACKETT, LIMITED,
18, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1889.

All rights reserved

Govt. of India
Central Public Works Department
Sri Sri Radha Krishana Public Library
New Delhi

PREFACE.

A WORD may be said here as to the origin of this book. The Duke of Sutherland, after a severe illness, had been exiled by his physicians and ordered to winter abroad. He had been well-nigh everywhere else, and in this case decided to proceed to the far East in his yacht, touching at various places of interest, and finally to visit Siam. A geographer and naturalist was required for the expedition, which, as it was to touch fresh woods and pastures new, was a position likely to afford something worthy of record. The position was offered to me, and I accepted it. We went overland to Brindisi, and found the *Sans Peur* lying there. I found all the novelty and adventure that I had expected, and the results are recorded in the following pages.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

LESSEPSIA

The *Sans Peur*, her Company and Armament—Candia—Port Said—Lady Strangford's Hospital—The Wild-cat Flag—The Suez Canal—Drive through Ismailia—Fishing in Lake Temsah—Steamer aground in the Canal—The Bitter Lake—Donkey-riding at Suez.

CHAPTER II.

THE RED SEA

27

The Wilderness—Mount Horeb—Hesperus—Christmas Day—Mas-sowah—Mr. Portal—Drive to General Gené's Camp—The Hababs—The Knight of the Locket—Italian Military Railway—Camp at Monkullo—Captain Michelini—Bivouac in the Camp—Ordered to the Front.

CHAPTER III.

TO THE FAR EAST

57

Aden—Across the Indian Ocean—Portuguese at Marmagoa—The new Railway-line to Bellary—Southern Ghauts—The Sea-Serpent—Ceylon—Madras—Journey across India—Festival of the total Eclipse of the Moon—Shipwrecked Sailors—Transformation Scene—Straits of Malacca—Singapore—Tropical Vegetation—Jinrickshas—Ball on board H.M.S. *Orion*—Luncheon at Government House—Tea at a Chinaman's House.

CHAPTER IV.

A ROYAL CREMATION	86
-----------------------------	----

Gulf of Siam—The Menam River—The Venice of the East—The Palace of Calm Delights—Preparing for the Cremation—Procession of the Urns of former Kings—Fire-brigade—Great Fire at Bangkok—The Royal Gardens—Classical Temples—Streets of Bangkok—State Dinner-party at the Royal Palace—The King and Queen of Siam.

CHAPTER V.

HIGH LIFE IN ASIA	118
-----------------------------	-----

Procession of the bodies of the Princes—Coinage of Siam—Siamese boys educated in England—Temple at Sabratummawan—Image of Buddha—Illuminations in the Premano—Our Reception by the King—Graceful National Customs—The King's Children—Presents—Shrines at the Premano—Noises of the Night—The White Elephants—Museum at Bangkok—Siamese Soldiers—Future Siamese Railways—The Emerald and Crystal Buddhas—Playing at Ball.

CHAPTER VI.

YOUNG SIAM	150
----------------------	-----

Native Art—Police Boat—Prisons—Vessels in the River—Flotilla Company—Habits of the People—Gambling-houses—House-boats—The Cremation Ceremonies—Festivities—High Jinks—Scrambling for Limes and Balls—Fireworks—Lamp and Dragon-dances.

CHAPTER VII.

AYUTHIA	168
-------------------	-----

Absolute Monarchy—Up the River—Palm and Bamboo—The White Ibis—Palace of Bang Palin—Tokay Lizard—Rice Cultivation—Arrival of the *Golden Needle*—Inundation of the Menam—Family Temples—Poll-tax—Ayuthia—Observatory—Picnic in a Mango-orchard—Sight-seeing—Elephant-taming—Siamese Sunday—Prince Doctor's Opinions.

CHAPTER VIII.

THIRTY YEARS' PROGRESS IN SIAM 194

Gold-mines and Prospecting—Lawn-tennis Party—Arabian Nights in the Premane—Shopping Excursion in a Gondola—Siamese Musical Instruments—Dinner-party of highly-civilized People—Wat Poh—The Colossal Buddha—Mother-of-pearl Marqueterie—Wat Chang—Wat Saphkèt—Rival Bands—Diseases in Siam—Future of Siam—Farewell to Bangkok.

CHAPTER IX.

RETURN TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY 217

Snakes of Siam and Poisonous Fish—Short Cut in the River—Islands in the Gulf of Siam—Prime Minister of the Sultan of Johore—Naval Manoeuvres at Singapore and Sham Fight—Cathedral and Prison at Singapore.

CHAPTER X.

THE SULTAN OF JOHORE 231

Johore Flag—The Istana—Chinese Opera—Four-in-hand Drive—Wines—‘A Dream of Fair Women’—Malay Curry—Brick and Tile Works—Chinese Theatre and Gambling-house—Malacca Canes and Sarongs—Malay Garden-party—Cultivation of Crops—Steam Saw-mills—Johore Forests—River Police—The Bag-piper—Farewell Dinner-party.

CHAPTER XI.

MUAR 261

The Duke Invested with the Order of Johore—The Sultan’s Yacht—Journey through the Salat Tambran—Mount Ophir—The Sultan’s Nephews—Istana at Muar—A Malay Breakfast—Present of a Tiger—The Capitan China—Fishing Villages—Mr. Swan’s Adventures—Coronation of the Sultan—Mount Ophir of Sumatra.

CHAPTER XII.

CEYLON 280

Coloured Fish—Juggler and Jeweller—Colom
ney—Ceylon Tea—Peradeniya—The Earthly Par
Palms—Figs—The Upas-tree—Kandy—Temple of
Library—Cobras—Native Agriculture—Buddhist Pri
the Tooth—
Excursion to Galangoda—Jewelled Dagoba—Wall Paintings—
and Colossal Buddha—Smaller Temples—‘Sensation’ Rock—Philola
‘A Floating Palace of Delight’

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RETURN VOYAGE 32

Laccadive Islands—Easter Day—Southern Cross—African Coast
—Arab Town at Aden—Queen of Sheba’s Tanks—Stay at Govern
ment House—Persian Carpets—A Ball—Description of Aden—Pro
ductions and Fauna of Aden—Sharp-nosed Dolphins—Squalls near
Suez—Railway Trip to Cairo.

CHAPTER XIV.

EGYPT 337

English Troops at the Citadel—Ostrich-farming—Museum of
Antiquities—Twirling and Howling Dervishes—The Races—The
Libyan Lake—Rail to Alexandria—P. and O. ship *Gwalior*—Mr.
Cornish’s Pump-works—Sights of Alexandria—Feast of Roses.

TO SIAM AND MALAYA.

CHAPTER I.

LESSEPSIA.

And mind you tell them a very pretty story, for they are exceedingly fond of stories ; my mother likes them to be very moral and aristocratic, and my father likes them to be merry, so as to make him laugh.

The Flying Trunk. HANS ANDERSEN.

A YACHT is something like the magic carpet of the Arabian Nights, that can transport its owner where he wishes, or, better still, like Hans Andersen's ' Flying Trunk,' for you pack up and get into it, and it carries you where you wish. It takes its time about it, perhaps.

David Copperfield's old lady wondered at the impiety of mariners and others who had the presumption to go ' meandering ' about the world ; for those who do not agree with her, and who have yachts, a yacht is the ideal vehicle for meandering.

Life in a large yacht combines the picturesqueness of seafaring with the comforts of the best passenger ships. Preamble over, the Duke shakes hands with his officers all round and makes a pleasant speech to the crew. The bagpipes play up during

dessert to welcome his Grace on board ; the crescendo and diminuendo tones have a pretty effect as Aleck walks up and down playing the handsome silver-mounted pipes, their dark blue and green tartan ribbons fluttering in the breeze.

It feels homely to me knowing my way about the vessel, to have the same cabin that I had in the Baltic, and to see so many faces that I know. Aleck, the piper, says they are all glad to see me. We are thirty-two souls on board : the Duke and the doctor, Lady Clare, a widowed relative of the Duke's family, and myself; Bertha, the Swiss maid, and three stewards ; the captain and first and second mate ; engineers and their crew, five ; carpenter, boatswain, and officers' steward, three ; the Italian *chef-de-cuisine* and his assistants—his myrindons, as the head-steward calls the marmitons—and the officers' cook, six ; and eight seamen. The Duke prefers using the fore-part of the yacht as cleaner and pleasanter, and commanding the best view ; the after-end, being left for the ship's company, gives them commodious quarters.

The *Sans Peur* carries, besides the gig built as a lifeboat, a steam-launch, a cutter, the second gig, and dinghy, a Norwegian cockle-shell called the ladies' boat, and a Berthon collapsible.

The saloon looked delightfully comfortable, as we arrived by starlight, with a fire and the table laid for dinner, the lamps with their coloured shades, the book-case attractive with the newest books, and plates and pictures set in the olive plush walls above the dado of carved teak. An 'Æolian' pianoforte stands in one corner of the saloon.

The deck-house is lined with sofas ; it has doors on each side and windows nearly all round, so that one can see the views while sitting at work or with a book. Above the wide, easy staircase that leads down to the saloon a folding table is spread, large enough to dine eight people, or a dozen at a pinch ; the servants stand at the head of the staircase to wait, and the table does not impede their use of this short cut to the pantry, while the dishes are brought hot from the galley to the doors. In fine weather we take our meals in the deck-house in preference to the saloon.

The 13th of December was a fine mild morning. We were all busy unpacking before noon, the hour fixed for sailing. We had our things laid neatly in the numerous cabin drawers, etc., and our trunks were carried below to the hold.

What changes in the deck-house ! It looks more business-like now than it did in its summer bowery appearance, when every corner was filled with plants and the beams hung with alternate rows of bunches of green and purple grapes from Trentham. Now there are three shining revolvers at the head of each sofa, and below the coloured glass frieze above the windows is another frieze of nine Winchester rifles which fire fifteen charges each without reloading, and a magazine of ammunition in a cupboard handy by with the atlases. All this, with the brass cannons on the deck, is for defence against possible pirates in the China seas.

Off, with a fair wind, going eleven-and-a-half knots an hour, Italy on the west and the line of

the Albanian hills all snowy to the eastward of us. Thermometer 60° at six p.m. We have not found our sea-legs, and the chairs are all lashed to the tables. Our burly 'bos'un' lays the weight of his body as well as the strength of his arms to the ropes. The Duke laughingly recommends 'this nice little treatise on the rolling of ships,' by W. Froude, written almost exclusively in algebra. Then his Grace, the better to entertain us, calls the captain with his charts and compasses into the deck-house to discuss plans, and we listen, like the Miss Flamboroughs, each holding an orange while they talk about monsoons, etc.

Here I should begin a fresh chapter on 'Our Privations,' a short one like that famous chapter on the snakes in Ireland. We have no privations on board the *Sans Peur*. Indeed, we carry two additional seamen in case of sickness among them in the tropics. Calmer next morning, as we are sheltered by Cephalonia and Zante, 'fior di Levante' on the port-side. We have fragrant mandarin oranges, with their leaves and flowers to hold and smell, the newest books and magazines to read, and the white cliffs of Zante to gaze upon. The Morea comes into view in the afternoon as we lose sight of Zante. There is a little flat islet near, and beyond it are the Peloponnesian mountains. The islet subdivides, and behold the Strophades—the storm-wext Strophades, 'haunts of Celæno and her Harpy brood,' which all pictures and descriptions represent as beetling crags and frowning precipices. They are not terrible in reality, nor at all like the pic-

tures, though mariners would probably avoid them in bad weather. This is an illusion lost ; never mind, I seek truth, mightier than any fiction.

The sea became much less rough as we came under the lee of lofty rugged Crete, with its grey barren rocks, touches of red on its cliffs, and snow-capped summits, reminding us of the Alps, towering above the belts of cloud. A whale is blowing up fountains in the nearer sea, a grand whale, a great beast.

The Duke, turning over pages of the 'Light of Asia,' and quoting the millions of Buddhists, says, 'It is the biggest religion going, by a long way,' and he is soon deeply wrapped in Buddha's captivating story.

The doctor swallows novels by the dozen, bolting them like pills.

At sunset a heavenly violet glow suffuses a near promontory of Candia, with its snow-crowned peaks all rosy, and blue mists at the base, bringing all manner of fanciful images to lose themselves among the shadows of the cliffs, until to our fancy the lofty island becomes a ghost, its head wrapped in white drapery of snowy peaks, its jagged stony base and rocky promontory hard in outline and picturesque in detail ; clouds, like fancies, are spreading their wings over the mysterious blue wall that we know, by faith, to be all flowery valleys and shadowy ravines, with possibly cornfields and vineyards. Now its aspect has become ashy pale, like that of after-death, the craggy foreground is a skeleton, the snowy crest has a greenish hue, quite livid. Moonlight will be a

glory to it, or as fame to a dead poet. The sea is purple 'wine-coloured.' Candia has been a beautiful companion to us all day, besides being a protection and a shelter. At five o'clock there is a revival on the mountain ; it is less corpse-like, more like a sculptured marble monument, warm from the sculptor's touch, softened and tender, like a fond memory of itself.

Now alone in the Mediterranean, equi-distant from Europe, Africa, and Asia, as measured by the captain's compasses, the *Sans Peur* rolls on to our chosen destiny. One passing steamer is all the vesselry we have seen since leaving Brindisi. No fear of collisions, any way. The grey solitude is gloomy. The Duke is somewhat hoarse, or worse, to our dismay, but he passes it off lightly.

'What matter,' says his Grace, 'I am not going to sing.'

The stewards Herries and Dark Charlie are bringing up more warlike implements, 'in case the savages come.' There are six boarding-pikes in a stand at the foot of the staircase leading from the deck-house to the saloon.

'In case those heathens think there is anything worth taking in a vessel of this sort, we'll give them a warm reception,' quoth the valiant Herries ; and he shows us the varieties of pistols, some so excellent 'that they will do their work loaded or unloaded, like the Irish magistrates.'

This impresses me ; I feel safer now.

Besides the deadly weapons before mentioned, there are several sorts of revolvers in cases 'for

occasional use'! the Duke's own firearms, the doctor's guns, the steward's rifle, and sundry and various warlike tools below.

Will the smell of black leather ever afterwards remind me of these pistol-cases? I read Sir J. Lubbock's book on 'The Pleasures of Life.' It seemed appropriate, and I longed for the time when I should begin to make my observations on new countries; like Glauber, I daresay I shall examine what everyone else has thrown away. Travelling in this way, one sees just the crust of a country, or the cream of a country, whichever way you like to take it. The result is pleasure, but much depends on the people you travel with. The Duke is most pleasant, a truly kindly nature, one forgets he is a Duke. 'Kind hearts are more than coronets, and—so forth. We watched the porpoises, some half-a-dozen of them, swimming at the bows of the yacht as if racing us, and now and then leaping out of the water in pairs; we also saw flying-fish skimming the sea like swallows; they are not frequently seen in the Mediterranean. The lofty tower of Damietta peeps up in this forenoon of the 17th, and Port Said comes in sight at two p.m. Lappy is eager to go ashore. This is the Duke's large Lapland dog; he bought him in Stockholm last summer.

The view is of a long breakwater of concrete blocks, with a skinny Arab in blue leaping about on it, and much shipping in the canal, the silver link between the blue sea and the Red Sea. The yacht has to pay over two hundred pounds toll for passing through the canal; even Monsieur de Lesseps' friends are not

exempt from toll. The Royal Yacht Club, however, enjoys the same privileges as the Royal Navy; and their vessels do not pay harbour dues.

We anchored near the English barracks, a building we bought from some Dutch people in the late war. Its commanding situation on a tongue of land will make it useful in any future event. Port Said is a busy and important place, full of all sorts and conditions of buildings, from gunboats to dredges, tents, tanks, shore erections, machinery, and poor Lady Strangford's hospital stranded on the sands and going to pieces for want of funds. There is no money to pay the nurses, and, although the "Sister" works for love and the doctors attend gratis, the building, which is roofed with a patent preparation of paper, is not watertight. This kind of roofing has failed here, though a dry climate, the sun being probably too powerful for the fabric, and the wet—for it does rain here sometimes—comes in on the patients' beds. It is a pity that this useful institution should be let drop, as many Englishmen coming home sick recover under the care of the English nurses, whereas they would be sure to die if taken to the Egyptian hospitals. Poor Lady Strangford was on her way out with an architect to see to the roofing, when she died suddenly, otherwise her energy would have carried out her plans and collected funds to work them, for which there is now no available capital left, and it causes regret that her effort should have been altogether in vain.

Boats with picturesque crews are flocking round us; they have to give place to an English man-of-

war's boat bringing a young officer, with side-arms, from the *Albacore* gunboat to make his bow to the Duke. All officialdom is coming off, health and canal officers, another and another boat hooking on to us, ten boat-loads of officials. Our yellow-haired captain is distracted, but determined not to let them board his ship. Make way for the British flag. The man-of-war's boat elbows its way in, the commander of the *Albacore* bows himself off, non-official boats crowd the port-side of the *Sans Peur*. The head-steward, an experienced officer formerly of the P. and O. service, has an eye on these. More boats hurrying to the fray for trading purposes. We try to land to get out of the hubbub. Monsieur de Lesseps' steam-launch follows us as we land from the dinghy. M. le Duc is offered the use of the Maison Administrative for himself and his party, and steam-launches and whatsoever his Grace desires. Thousand thanks. We have everything we want, but million thanks. 'Il n'y a pas de quoi, etc. Mille etceteras.' Compliments bandied.

Then we land, shouted at admiringly (?) by a tribe of Arab children, dwellers in gipsy tents hard by, and walk through the dirty suburbs, all smelling of Africa, and see our first camel, and grow rapturous over sugar-cane and palm-trees. Port Said has become a ragged Oriental town—it might be of any age—not like the new wooden Yankee-looking place I remember. All the various national flags give it what Pierre Loti calls 'un air de Babel en fête.'

We returned to the yacht and sat on the bridge till after gunfire enjoying the regular Egyptian sunset,

amber flushed with red, like 'a golden vase filled with roses,' being devoured by mosquitoes, while listening to the sweet birds' songs and sounds of all manner of machinery and fanfaronades and cries and talk in all manner of languages, including pigeon English from a heathen Chinee. We hear we are to leave at daylight to-morrow, as the pilot has orders from Monsieur de Lesseps to take the *Sans Peur* through the canal at more than regulation speed, only we must get on before another vessel that will be going at the regulation speed. Weighed anchor at six. We are the first in the canal to-day. Being Sunday, they have hoisted the Duke's private flag, with the wild-cat rampant, which looks like pussy taking her first dancing-lesson, at the mizen, the yacht's burgee at the main-mast. The Duke told us the story of the wild-cat on his flag. When the Danes in old times came invading Sutherland, the wild-cats from the mountains came down and helped the braver Scots to drive them off, while the other inhabitants took refuge in their Pictish towers.

Lake Menzaleh extends on the starboard horizon, covered with lateen-rigged vessels; the shore crowded with quail and innumerable flamingoes, looking like white towns, or encampments, in their distant flocks. On the port-side there is the appearance of a great lake beyond the strip of sand, with sand hillocks reflected in its waters; but no, it is a mirage—at least, so declares the pilot, who ought to know. The map seems to show water on both sides, but the pilot and the captain declare it is wrong. By-and-by the silvery line of our course is well-defined

between two infinities of mirage and desert sand. 'Murray' says it is a wide expanse of lake and morass rendered gay and brilliant with innumerable flocks of rosy pelicans, scarlet flamingoes, and snow-white spoonbills. All this, and my own eyes, I prefer to believe, pilots and captains notwithstanding. It is the metropolis of wild fowl, geese, ducks, herons, and other birds. Kantarah (El Kantara, the bridge) we see at 11.10 a.m., a meeting-place of caravans of pilgrims from Mecca and Jerusalem.

'There's a busy scene,' says the Duke, and so it is; no pilgrims, however, but strings of camels and navvies in blue gowns and white turbans, all busy at work repairing the steep banks of the canal, especially busy a figure in blue calling 'baksheesh,' whenever he can catch anyone's eye except that of the Egyptian ganger in black holding his parasol over his head. The captain showed us the pith hats bought at Port Said for himself and the ship's company. We all fished out our helmets; the Duke's is a heavy white military helmet, ours are grey and very unbecoming. We postpone wearing them for the present, though the sun is scorching on the light sand which makes the canal muddy-looking.

Our pilot, in his extra care, manœuvred us aground, and before we got off the *Asia*, of the Anchor line, took that opportunity to pass us. The banks are in many places defended by camp-shedding, and tamarisks are dotted sparsely on the banks, which rise higher as we approach Ismailia, where they are sometimes wattled, and binding plants are encouraged, reeds, tamarisks, and a sort of willow.

Many Arabs and camels are employed upon the banks. They are not going to widen the canal, but to increase its depth at the borders, making it thirty feet deep throughout. Our passage washes the banks a good deal, as we are going at nearly double the regulation speed, seven and a half to eight knots an hour. The pilot pats our skipper complacently on the back, saying, 'We did it cleverly that time, dear boy.' The captain resents it. He has never had his vessel run aground before—and get into the papers—all through an ignorant, incompetent son of a something—I forget what he said—and he does not like it.

At three p.m. we see Viceroy Said's old house above us on the right, a mere châlet with an iron verandah, and before us the lakes are opening out. The khedivial avenue from the châlet to Ismailia has not flourished, but foliage generally is abundant round Ismailia. There are heavy clouds overhead. The Duke tells me 'the evaporation is so great from the Bitter Lakes that there is always a strong current in from the Red Sea caused by nothing but the evaporation.' His Grace is an authority on this canal, having been here so often during and since its construction. He has visited the Panama Canal with Monsieur de Lesseps as well. There are several house-boats here, and seven 'mudhoppers' for carrying off the mud.

We anchored at Ismailia at 3.30, opposite the Khedive's palace, a handsome stone house half-hidden in the sycamore woods. The place smells strongly of the sea. Monsieur Thevenet, Chef du Service du

Domaine et des Eaux de la Compagnie du Canal de Suez, a catalogue of a title, came off by order of Monsieur de Lesseps with the count's private steam-launch to take us ashore, and he had an open carriage with pretty Arab horses ready at the pier to take us driving round to see everything of interest. First through the avenue of large caroub-trees, by side of which the young palm-groves are planted, and the fileo woods. I did not know this tree; it is a sort of casuarina, with long beard-like fronds and a feathery sort of flower. It is an Australian tree. I was amazed at the growth of the woods in what I remembered as a sandy desert with a few slips of fruit-trees stuck in it, trying to grow.

There are now three thousand inhabitants in Ismailia; sixteen thousand at Port Said. We drove to the end of the Sweet-water Canal, and thence through the long, but here less flourishing, caroub avenue to the châlet we had seen from below, the villa of Said Pasha, in whose reign the canal was projected. Monsieur de Lesseps brought him up here to this highest ground in the neighbourhood, whence you can see Jebel Ataka, which overhangs Suez, blue in the distance. Monsieur de Lesseps said that some day he would see large vessels float where there was then only desert. The pasha replied, 'I will show my confidence in you by building a house here at this spot, where I shall behold it; ' and this red and buff striped châlet was erected. Said died before the fulfilment of the prophecy.

Said's villa has fallen out of repair, but it is still sometimes used as an annexe to a convalescent hos-

pital built near it. Ismailia is much fever-haunted, owing, it is said, to the constant watering of the vegetation. In its early days it seemed made to be the sanatorium of Egypt, with its exhilarating desert breezes. Monsieur Thevenet looked fever-worn and delicate. His children live in France, and he goes home for three months at least every third year. Mr. Roberts of Suez likewise calls Ismailia a feverish place ; he says six out of seven pilots have been laid up in hospital at Ismailia at a time.

The fashionable world of Ismailia was out walking or driving on this road, which looks over the lake and the branches of the canal. On returning we passed the Khedive's palace, now seldom occupied, which was constructed for the ceremony of opening the canal, when whole groves and gardens were brought here full-grown from Cairo, only, of course, to die. The road was then made to the châlet, as Ismail expected to have to lodge some of his guests there. The fêtes and all connected therewith cost twelve millions of francs. Monsieur de Lesseps regretted this, though it was his triumph ; but Ismail was a big baby in his hands to be coaxed and humoured. It was an advertisement, certainly, but this kind of work needed none.

Monsieur de Lesseps, senior, has not been here for four years. His sons come here occasionally.

We passed the now disused Canal de Service, which leads to the quarries where the stone—a bad sort—was dug for use in the constructions. They let in water here at an early period of the works, as of course there was no water-way, and everything

had to be brought here by camels. In the process of filling the lakes an accident occurred which might have had disastrous consequences, but which, in fact, only expedited the filling. A breakage occurred on the first rush of water from the Red Sea, which threatened to carry away much of the banks, and flood the whole basin into a mere lagoon, useless for navigation. Fortunately, the injury to the banks was comparatively slight, and the central water-way was retained.

We passed a 'square,' or public garden, shady and pleasant, with alleys and a large white flowering exotic tree in the centre, and still went on through groves and gardens, and the Greek town shaded with plants of eucalyptus, poinsettia, and others, to Monsieur Thevenet's house. There he showed us the machinery of the waterworks, the sweet-water force-pumps, &c. If these stopped, Port Said would starve. We admired his gardens, where he gathered tea-roses for us, and pepper and hibiscus, to show us what they can grow here in the desert even so near Christmas, the yellowing poplars affording, according to Monsieur Thevenet, the only signs of a difference in the seasons. He showed us a Pharaoh's rat, a wild animal that they have lately caught in the desert, a creature something like a large mongoose, with a long thin tail, very shy and fierce, and, like most desert animals, of the colour of the sands, or the sands where they are shaded by hillocks and the shrubs that are the camels' food.

There were ipomeas and a large bougainvillea,

with its beautiful purple-clustered sprays forming a long arbour walk, made all of one spreading plant with quite a timber stem of wonderful size, considering the newness of the planting of Ismailia, as well as jasmines and roses, vines and vegetables, showing how readily the desert can be made to blossom as the rose, and many sorts of what Monsieur Thevenet called 'multipliants,' whose drooping branches take root and spread.

We drove on past the railway-station and the little church, through the Arab town, with its picturesque and busy population, its shops, and stalls and large flat baskets of various cereals, mostly exposed on the ground, to a small enclosure, where are preserved the sphinxes and other relics which were dug up at Rameses in cutting the sweet-water canal. One sphinx of blue granite is fairly well preserved; and still better is a group of three seated figures in pink syenite, two of them holding in the clenched left hand the Tau. The central figure wears a different hat to the broad cushiony Parsee-like caps of the other two. There are bathing-machines on the border of Lake Teimsah, by the sandy shore on the same side as the Arab town. People come here from Cairo for the sea-bathing.

We were offered the use of the electric-light boat to go to Suez in, letting the yacht follow by daylight; but, as there was no good sleeping accommodation on board, we gave up seeing the weird effect of the canal by electric light, and elected to see the desert scenery by day. The sunset was a glorious effect of flame-colour, with a rich violet glow above,

where the crescent moon glittered like the national flag. They say there is not much variation of the seasons here, but we were all glad of our wraps in the cold breeze, with the thermometer at 60°. A little more wind, and there would be a dust-storm. The enemy of the canal is wind, shifting the sand. It depends upon continual labour to make it a continuous benefit; dust-storms have sometimes been known to delay vessels three days in the canal and in these lakes. The Duke says the yacht has been lifted four inches in this lake by the increased buoyancy of the water—"no, not with our consumption of the stores.' The lakes here, especially the Bitter Lakes, are extremely salt. There are salt-beds in these lakes, solid like chalk-pits. The density of the water at Ismailia will cause six inches displacement in a flat-bottomed boat drawing twenty feet of water.

The fish of Lake Temsah are very good; we had some of them for breakfast, a sort of soles, and we had for dinner some good white salmon—as the steward wrote it in the menu. We went ashore at some distance from Ismailia to see our men draw the seine in comparatively shoal water. The fish were new to all of us. Our first haul caught what looked like grey mullet—they called them salmon—with a sharp fin like a perch, one fin too many for a trout; some bream-like fish and a chad, as Mr. Butters, the first mate, a Cornishman, called it; and another like a mullet, with no spots, but with a fine line down the sides. We caught a very delicate sort of white-bait, and a red and greenish rock-fish, and another

fish something like the chad, with vertical bands in grey and yellow, and purple in the gills. They found mussels, cockles, and 'butter-fish' much sweeter to eat than the cockle. The two largest fish in the net were sea-trout.

I gathered several varieties of a juicy sort of marine desert-plants, and a dwarf tamarisk with elongated pink berries, and one sort with green berries, which become yellow when ripe. Bertha took home a green locust to make a pet of. We always speak of the yacht as home. When the Duke was passing through the Red Sea with the Prince of Wales, on their way to India in the *Serapis*, sailing about twelve miles an hour, they sailed for two days through a swarm of dead locusts which had been driven to sea.

Hereabouts, according to German Egyptologists and others, was formerly the head of the Red Sea and the place where the Israelites crossed over. This was most likely at one time the head of the Red Sea, but I think we may reasonably look for the crossing-place of the Israelites lower down in the canal, at the point where the Haj caravan road passes to Mecca. I will give my reasons by-and-by when we come to the spot.

We climbed the steep quicksandy banks, and the men had a race up the bank, and they all rolled down, or leapt off, or got down the quickest way they could ; a shilling to the winner, the first up and down. Dead heat between two of the men ; up again like cats, and then a wash to get the sand off them. Then came a swimming-match, and the men

rowed out for 'the swim, the dog wildly excited. 'Fetch 'em, Lappy.' Rose the burly bos'un blown. 'Where are ye when the rose is blown?' The youngest swimmer won.

When the smart engineer had a ducking there were roars all round and chaff.

'Ah, you just jumped out of the net. A fine fish.'—'Is there deep water again here for the net?'

'Yes, *I* know it's deep,' said the engineer, and they drew it again; cockles and jelly-fish in the next haul, nothing else but mud, horrid black, slimy mud. The sand on the west end of the lake is thickly encrusted with salt. Fat Joe at the water-jar.

'Easy with it, Joe.'—'Put some water with it, Joe.'—'Roly poly has fallen away since his race.'

Now the men have leapfrog all round, and high jump, and all sorts of sports, pleasant on this cool, cloudy day.

At evening the light-hearted sailors wake 'the lively strain,' or simple homely pathos of the sailor's love-song, and foot the merry reel to Aleck's pipes, the second cook's banjo, and the bones. The moon shaped like a caique, glittering upon the lost and re-born lake, this Perdita of waters.

I was up before the anchor rose and on the bridge to see the entrance to the Bitter Lakes, for I had never yet travelled on the canal below Ismailia. Pretty scenery of its peculiar sort, blue lakes with sandy borders rising into undulating desert fading off into illimitable azure, the blue Jebel Ataka rising in the southern distance, all soon to be shut out as we re-enter the deeply sunken canal: the furniture of the

landscape comprises a house-boat moored to its little plot of lattice-fenced enclosure, neat signal houses with gardens and trellised vines. Wherever a drop of fresh water can be brought, there palms and gardens grow. There is clay just under the sand. Here is a palm-grove half-hidden behind the sand-bank. Besides these objects here is a long train of trucks drawn on rails by mules, each mule led by an Arab. There is abundant employment of labour, but no *corvée*, we English stood out against that.

The French mail-steamer ahead of us, that went on last night by electric light, has run aground, and has been stuck since three o'clock this morning. This may delay us, though the pilot opines there will be room enough for us to pass, although another large steamer blocked by her cannot get by. After much signalling by balls and pennants at the mast-head of the stranded steamer we hear we may probably have to remain all day and night here in the canal; other steamers are evidently unable to pass this disabling ship. Just at the entrance to the Bitter Lakes, too, it is provoking to think that a hundred yards would have cleared us. 'A very rare thing this to happen, not one in three months, not once before in this year, and never before with the *Messageries* boats' in the pilot's recollection, an English pilot, too. Five vessels all here waiting to pass, and the *Peninsular and Oriental* ship *Coromandel*, wanting to come northward, is in the Bitter Lakes just ahead, fuming away finely. Well she may, the pilot has known a twelve days' stoppage in his time.

At a quarter-past two we are told by some one in authority that we may move on and pass the ships, all *à propos* of nothing that we can see. It seems a special favour to ourselves brought down in a message by the tug which has convoyed a flotilla of lighters into which the Messageries ship will have to unload.

We get up steam, and pass the *Niagara* of Liverpool, *Hypatia* of West Hartlepool, *Perim* of London, and *Daphne* of Hamburg, all lying near the tongue of green and palm-grown land ended by the pier and flag-staff opposite the white, salt-encrusted shore on the port bow. The fact transpires that the station-master here could not give us permission to pass, an order must be given by two men, one at each end of the canal; one official alone has no power to issue an enabling order; and a special pilot must come and see for himself what orders may be given. This sounds red-tapey, considering the ease with which we passed when permitted to do so; but the French are good men of business, nevertheless, and they are obliged to have respect to their canal banks. We are now going on at our own risk; if anything goes wrong, this ship will have to stand the whole of the damage.

The lines of canal-buoys still mark the course of the channel; here lies, somewhat aslant, the Messageries boat *Yarra* of Marseilles, the cause of the delay, and the tug-boat by her. We go very close to her, then mutually dip our ensigns, and the officers salute each other. Now we enter the Bitter Lakes—now we are to go as hard as ever the engineer

can pull us—for a bit. Now, at 2.40 p.m., we pass the Peninsular and Oriental ship, that still lies waiting impatiently in the Bitter Lakes, and an Italian vessel; we dip our ensign to the Peninsular and Oriental.

Now the other vessels going our way are coming on as well, the whole fleet of them; we head the procession, and another vessel is coming up from Suez. Really this one canal is not large enough to carry all the commerce, increasing as it is, too, every year; it reminds one of the Strand obstruction at Temple Bar.

'How's her head?' is the anxious query. It seems to be easy, and we move on. The pilots magnify their office as much as possible. As we pass the *St. Regulus* (?) of Bombay, there is a signal up ahead that we are to anchor again, in order that a mail-boat in the distance may pass us here.

We rowed ashore on the side opposite the distant railway to a low sandy shore, very deceptive and apparently receding from us. What we thought and were told was ten minutes off took us forty minutes to row to it; the white sand, with black marks on it, under the clear green water looking as if about six feet below the boat. A lighthouse is built near here, and several buoys with black cormorants perched upon them. There are plenty of pretty comb-like shells (*Murex tribulus*) on the shore; indeed, the beach is made almost entirely of shells, cockles, mussels, and tiny whorls of the *Terebridae* family of shells, extending far inland, where, as far as one can judge, the water has not been of late.

Here the desert is dotted with hillocks of white sand, fine and without shells, like mole-hills something, with holes in their sides, the holes mostly in pairs, but sometimes in groups. Here also are camel foot-prints and those of some other animal—gazelles probably, as they are too deep for dogs—Lappy makes no footprints—yet full small for asses. Farther inland the shells diminish in quantity, though they are still numerous, the cockles always worn and nearly always broken.

We rowed home in the violet glow of evening, the dim daffodil of the sky becoming later a dense flame colour with tender azure above and light broken clouds. Dense bronze-tinted clouds gathering all round, chiefly over Jabel Ataka, ready to fall on the arid desert, I hope.

‘ You have a fine lot of weeds this time, ma’am,’ the mate remarks of the specimens of desert plants I have brought on board; small tusty plants of the same nature, but less succulent than the juicy and berried plants I gathered near Lake Teinsah.

Much interest is taken in natural history by the officers of the ship, but they have not yet acquired the rudiments. ‘ How’s that cockroach of yours?’ Herries the steward asks Bertha concerning her pet locust.

We had bass or bream for dinner. ‘ Some calls it bass, some calls it bream,’ said the fisherman, when questioned. We have seen wild-duck in the lake here.

Off at daybreak. I was up on the bridge by half-past seven, just before we entered the canal ditch, whose steep banks shut out the view of the

desert undulations, and we could only see Jebel Ataka rising acrially blue behind the yellow ridge. Here are great dredging-machines near the ferry, where the main road of the Haj caravan passes to Mecca. A caravan of pilgrims and camels was here waiting to cross. The high banks are made by the continued dredging, otherwise the desert is level here, as if it had formerly been sea. To me this place looks like the real point of the Israelites' crossing. They would have travelled by a known road, with wells. Nothing terrestrial is more immutable than a line of road ; especially so in the East. The waters were divided ; on one side was the basin of the present Bitter Lakes, on the other was the Red Sea. These were a wall of defence on both hands, and behind the Israelites the waters flowed back when God withdrew His mighty wind.

Suez lies to the starboard, behind the spit of land ending the canal ; Suez, pretty with its white houses set in foliage, the stratified Jebel Ataka rising brokenly behind the town. The blue canal here makes a semi-circular sweep towards Suez, where the train is just coming in. This is a sort of no man's land ; neither French, English, nor Egyptian. It is Lessepsia. Now we are in the blue Red Sea ; and here are the docks, built with bad cement by a French contractor. Lesseps has placed near here as a monument to Waghorn, originator of the overland route, his bust shaded by a large crimson poinsettia.

Mr. Roberts, the Peninsular and Oriental Company's agent, came to see what he could do for the

Duke. We meant to ride to Suez on donkeys, so he helped Herries and others to mount us. Lady Clare took the lead on 'Mary Anderson,' with the doctor on 'Two Lovely Black Eyes ;' the Duke was mounted on the 'Bishop of London,' rather a hard trotter ; I secured 'Jubilee,' (appropriately named for me), which I thought would be a steady-going beast. Herries looked majestic on a moko ; perhaps the creature was proud, but I hardly think he was happy. The stout steward only rode as far as the station, electing to go on to Suez by train, anything to get out of the way of the chaff about his requiring two donkeys to carry him. He rode one when he was here before. 'Ah, that donkey has grown older since then, and can't carry you now. You must mount an elephant.'

I felt almost young again as I enjoyed the two-mile gallop to the town, and quite at home on the clumsy eastern saddle. We walked our donkeys gently through the busy, crowded streets, and, when we dismounted, I followed the tall Duke's white helmet, as an oriflamme, through the bazaar. Suez has seven thousand inhabitants, and is a very dirty place. The pariah dogs are the scavengers. When these grow too numerous, they poison them at intervals, by five or six hundred at a time. The vegetable gardens were pointed out to us a little beyond the town. They are not badly off for supplies here, and they get plenty of milk, as they keep Aden cows—pretty creatures, dove-coloured, with humps, and smaller, tawny cows, with humps less defined. Mrs. Roberts gave us great purple

branches of the thorny bougainvillea, as the nearest approach to holly, for our Christmas pudding. It was like spoiling the Egyptians, to carry off this glorious mass of rich purple bloom, though this splendour of colour is nothing to them. They can grow flowers in profusion, and the sunsets here are so magnificent that even the Arabs will sometimes stop to gaze at them.

'The seasons here are marked as they are elsewhere,' says Mr. Roberts. Monsieur Thevenet said just the reverse at Ismailia. A dragon-fly hovering about, and many butterflies, prevent our realizing that it is the shortest day; and, as Christmas is approaching, our officers and men have to-day put on white duck suits.

Mrs. Roberts has a choice collection of curios, embroideries, and works of art, and a beautiful glass cabinet of shells and Red Sea corals. I gathered on the shore many of the fairy *Lamellaria* shells that float on the wavelets, which look as if made of tissue paper. The Duke invited Mr. Roberts, with his wife and daughter, to lunch on board; and soon afterwards we left Suez. This is the real farewell to Europe.

CHAPTER II.

THE RED SEA.

But to thee, as thy lode-stars resplendently burn
 In their clear depths of blue, with devotion I turn,
 Bright Cross of the South ! and beholding thee shine,
 Scarce regret the loved land of the olive and vine.

Shive on—my own land in a far distant spot,
 Where the stars of thy sphere can enlighten it not,
 And the eyes that I love, tho' e'en now they may be
 O'er the firmament wandering, can gaze not on thee.

MRS. HEMANS.

BEYOND the Well of Moses, with its solitary palm-tree marked on the chart, the well a fount perpetually bubbling from the ground, is the spot where Palmer and Gill were murdered, the precipice they were compelled to leap off.

Suez looks like a white star retreating in the distance.

The shaded blue African mountains are much loftier than the reddish desert sand-hills of Edom, from which the Red Sea is said to take its name. The Persians call this the 'White Sea,' from the milky hue of its waters where the white sand is stirred up, and the white coral lining its shores. The water is of a lovely shade of blue. Jebel Ataka

rises two thousand six hundred and forty feet. One would think there could be no tending of flocks in Midian ; it looks all desert and parched rock of red or rusty hue. Towards evening the coasts present a yet greater contrast to each other : the rugged high lands of Africa are shadowed purple-blue, while the tawny crags of Arabia are suffused with warm, rosy light ; mist falling, the east becomes rosy lilac, the west a deep plum-colour. Soon all chills off, and the deepening greys remind us that this is the shortest day. Now the whitened precipices of the Arabian hills look ashy, as if burnt out ; but to the very last the summits retain a tender pinky hue.

I read some chapters of Exodus and Job. The scenery brought vividly before my recollection the music of 'Israel in Egypt,' which I had heard just before leaving home : this wild, mysterious landscape is so fitted for the scene of miracles, as one reads marvellous natural convulsions in every indentation of the coast. I seemed again to hear that loud, majestic strain, 'He rebuked the Red Sea,' followed by the breathed amazement, 'And it was dried up,' re-echoed from shore to shore.

The 'Hailstone Chorus' is the finest descriptive piece of music I know, and nearly equal to this is the solemn, awful chorus of the 'Darkness' and the 'Death of the First-born,' followed by the pastoral, 'He led them forth like sheep ; He led them through the wilderness,' where one cannot travel safely even now—witness Palmer and Gill's precipice.

At dawn the scene was changed : the wilderness

was spread before us, dark beneath the sunrise, only the topmost crags flecked with brightness in his rising, as he shone full on the hills of Africa, and on the blackened wreck of the *Ulysses* standing upright, her bows almost sixty feet out of the water. A rugged, darkened lower range of hills—the island of Shadwan—now appears in front of the blue mountains of Africa, ranging from six thousand to seven thousand feet high. On this island, the captain tells me, he once gathered three hundredweight of the most beautiful shells he ever saw. Sinai is just visible behind the loftier peak of Saint Katherine, in the midst of the appallingly wild range of Horeb. It is much disputed whether the peak of Sinai be actually visible from the sea. Our captain (who knows the Red Sea as I know Great Russell Street) pointed it out to me, and I saw it distinctly, even without the glass.

It is as if a violent storm had here been suddenly petrified; this scene of Almighty wrath and mercy. The colours in the morning light are exquisitely tender above the indigo-tinted sea. We have come quicker than we reckoned, having had a two-knot current with us since midnight. These variable currents and the incalculable deviations of the compass, puzzle navigators in the Red Sea.

Under the dark-blue-lined double awning on the deck we sit and read 'The Light of Asia,'—our days rock on and sea splashes cool all round, humming in 'innumerous' harmonies, the breeze caressing us into peace, while on the north-east Mount Horeb, like a warin cloud, melts in the blue space of the

firmament. The little pet wild duck patters the deck fearlessly by our side, the Lapland dog comes near, snuffing us a kindly recognition—not frightening the wild duck nor the brace of rabbits scampering round the deck; these ground-game creatures belong to the sailors, but they are always welcome on our end of the ship. A blue ensign of gauzy bunting is hung up to veil the glare of the forenoon sky below the awning, and everything is arranged for our well-being as we sail on to tropic lands, the first sight of which, Darwin tells us, is like beholding a new planet. Above the peace shine the bright stars of hope and expectation. The *Æolian* wind sweeps lightly the cordage of the fair white ship, accompanying our thoughts as they rove at large in fancies eager yet restful. The mountains of the Egyptian coast are visible as a purple fringe of peaks all day. The sun sets like a firework in crimson and gold over *Jebel-Umm-Kabash*. The temperature of the sea is eighty degrees, the same as the air. The sea-bath feels warin to the feet. We have sea-baths at will; we have only to lift up a lid in the floor of our cabins and turn a tap.

I cannot think that luxury is always ‘*le mauvais superflu*.’ The only crook in our lot just now is that we cannot at once get the next number of the serial story we are reading.

‘Oh, I can tell you how it ends,’ says the Duke. ‘Of course she don’t believe in him till the last chapter but three, and then it comes out all right.’

Now we know how his Grace would construct a novel, a kind of book he seldom reads.

Early on the 23rd December, I saw the Morning Star ; I thought it was daybreak, and looked out of my porthole, and lo ! it was Venus like a perfect tiny crescent, much rounded, exquisitely beautiful and glittering. I never saw this effect before, and, though I was of course aware of the phases of Venus, I did not know they could ever be discerned by the naked eye. I read later—28th February, when at Bangkok—in the *Times* of 18th January, of Venus appearing (at home) as a morning star with more than her usual splendour. No wonder so near Christmas that people talked of the Star of Bethlehem.

One bluff visible of the Nubian coast to-day, naught else save flying-fish, bonitas and porpoises. We are now within the tropics, having passed the tropic of Cancer this afternoon. At sunset we pass the Emerald mountains of Nubia in the distance and St. John's Isle, called by the natives the Emerald Isle ; but here the emeralds are mineral. The North Star is already low on the horizon.

On Christmas Eve our solitude was unbroken save when we dipped our ensign to a Peninsular and Oriental steamer homeward-bound. I could see to read till five minutes to six.

After dinner we went aft to listen to the men singing and making ready for Christmas Eve, and dancing the hornpipe by moonlight to Aleck's pipes. The second cook, tenor and banjoist, who was in smart fancy dress, danced a wild hornpipe and breakdown capitally. Rose, the bos'un, sang his favourite, perhaps his only song, in honour of Beaconsfield :

'As a statesman we'll ne'er find his equal,
To his country he's ever proved true-ew,' &c.

The sailors kept the music up late, ending with three cheers for the Duke of Sutherland, and three cheers for the ladies; ditto for the doctor, and three cheers more for the whole ship's company.

On Christmas Day we were all sea-sick, except the Duke, with the heat and roughness. At 3.15 a.m., his Grace decided to make for Massowah as a refuge, and, before dark, we got into smoother water behind a small island within the coral reefs. Land seen with the night-glasses three miles ahead. Careful steering required, cautious and slow because of the coral reefs; the bright moonlight made it somewhat easier.

The chef did his best for a Christmas dinner, considering the rumbling, tumbling of the sea. It always amazes me how they can cook at all when every lurch may succeed in capsizing their saucepans; and 'dishing up' will ever remain a marvel of legerdemain. He iced us a little cake to look seasonable, and gave us roast turkey and plum-porridge.

We drank to absent friends.

Daylight showed the lofty, wavy outline of the Abyssinian mountains rising above the mist as we steam down the coast about two or three miles off shore. Below this Alpine chain is an undulating ridge of table-land, then another lower range of hills and the low, level shore, sandy and sultry, with green crops here and there; the large, white tomb

of Mirza-Sheikh-Boneer on the shore and Massowah before us.

We dropped anchor at Massowah soon after breakfast, and the Italian admiral, thinking the *Sans Peur* was a ship of war, quickly sent off a young officer from the flagship to ask our intentions. The Duke at once went to call on the admiral, who accompanied his Grace on shore, and we ladies went on shore for a walk. Lappy gave himself leave to swim ashore, took a walk, and swam back safely. This Lapland dog has never heard of sharks. Lady Clare went on walking with her maid, while I sat with the Duke and the admiral in the officers' pavilion at the Cercle drinking 'soda champagne,' that is, raspberry syrup and seltzer. The flies are so thick as to blacken everything; they say it is the season for them, they go away in summer. A young artillery officer, son and aide-de-camp of the General San Marzano, in chief command of the army here, was introduced to us as a *rara avis*, a *lusus naturae*, a young man who did not smoke nor drink, whom they laughingly but affectionately called 'a young man of all the virtues.' He was commissioned to take us about to see the neighbourhood. We looked into the bazaar, a narrow winding street, partially shaded with matting, about as unclean as any bazaar can be; the shops are only dirty little holes under the houses, with very little in them, apparently, to sell. It is true we saw them out of business hours, when most of the people were asleep; the hours of siesta are apparently long here. The other streets are not imposing, being gullies of about eight to

ten feet wide. The Italians, however, mean to see to all this, and remodel the town and drain it.

We walked back to the boat through the busier parts of the town where the Europeans have their wharves, employing a pleasant, merry-faced black population, who sing in chorus over their work of landing stores from lighters. Many of these, and the boatmen about the harbour, are Somali men from Aden.

It is quite an Alpine country over yonder, well-suited to be an Italian colony. The mountains we see are never snow-clad, but the admiral says there is frequently snow on those of the interior, loftier still than these. The town is entirely Oriental, nothing has been Europeanised. There are two mosques, but, though Abyssinia is Christian, I have not had churches pointed out to me. There are but four European ladies in Massowah, and only one of them is young; so Lieutenant San Marzano told me regretfully. The Italian consul's house is the only one that gives any idea of real comfort. They have no longer a consulate here, as the place is under military control; but this man, who was the consul, still lives here for business purposes. We have no consul, although there are five hundred English subjects here, chiefly Banians, British Indian subjects who bring trade in cotton, grain, perfumes, ornaments, etc., from Bombay. Many of the shops in the bazaar belong to the Banians. The Italians, who of course wish to keep trade, especially in printed cottons, in their own hands, ride rough over these people, might being right under a military *régime*. We have a consul at Suakin, but Suakin is shut up.

For some time to come there must be a considerable trade with Bombay ; for, as at Suakin, everything is brought from Bombay, the Italians (at least, it was so before the peace) draw nothing from the country—‘except prawns,’ said the lieutenant, doubtfully.

‘And except eggs, I suppose, and milk?’ for I had seen the humped Aden cows here, both grey and light brown. Still I hear they get beef from Bombay, and the mutton here is bad.

We bought ostrich feathers from the numerous pertinacious Arabs and Jews that thronged the yacht. ‘My bargain ver sheep,’ kept on the representatives of the Abyssinian lost tribes.

‘We can’t look without these fellows shaking feathers before one’s face. They don’t understand no.’

‘They understand the advantage of not understanding,’ said the Duke.

‘Ras Alula and English great friends, Italian no good,’ say the donkey boys. Perhaps they represent the feeling of the natives who hate this state of things. The Italians shut up the port from trade, which has now no outlet. The Italian original idea was to beat the Abyssinians or hold their territory until they should come to terms and open up trade.

The Italians are not as yet spending much money on this place ; they laid out very little so long as the fortune of war made it uncertain whether or no they would remain here ; but one hears the railway whistle, and they have far-seeing plans to which I shall refer later. There are eighteen thousand Italian troops here and two thousand Bashi-Bazouks,

and they have already sent for reinforcements. The tents are scattered about the plain to a good distance. I shall throughout speak of the place as it was when I saw it; this will give the best idea of what the Italians have done before and since.

At four o'clock Mr. Portal, of the English mediatorial mission, came off to call on the Duke. Unluckily it was just as we were stepping into the gig for an excursion inland arranged by the admiral, and the horses and carriages and escort were already waiting. The Duke asked Mr. Portal to dinner, but we were sorry that he was engaged to dine with the Italian general and going to Suez early next morning in a coasting steamer. I was very sorry to miss seeing more of a man who must have had much of interest to tell. Mr. Portal was kept a prisoner for eight days by Ras Alula, the then Abyssinian general, who was interested in keeping the Negus misinformed as to the strength of the Italian force. He told the Negus that the Italians were only eight thousand eight hundred men.

‘I am English,’ said Portal.

‘No, you are Italian, you are soldier.’

Luckily Mr. Portal had one of the Italian horses, and was saved by it. The interpreter, who had no horse, was killed.

Two mule-carriages were waiting for us on the mainland, and some pretty Arab horses, in case the gentlemen preferred riding. The Duke drove one carriage, and the young Italian officer was my companion in the other. He was, I fancy, not used to mule-driving, for he had continually to call to the

'puntato,' a non-commissioned officer who rode by our side, to come and pull the mule along. But the animal would not go, so the Duke had to take the lead across the level, and now by the aid of the 'puntato' and the whip we followed in a deviating course. My fingers itched to take the reins, but I could find no polite excuse for offering to drive while the lieutenant rode one of the pretty Arabs. The plain was set with a plant with broad, bright-green leaves, the *Calotropis procera*,* and with tall cactus-like plants, very stiff and straight. These latter are, in fact, euphorbias, for there is only one species of the great cactus order found in an indigenous wild state outside of the New World, and that is the curious leafless *rhipsalis cassytha* of Ceylon. In one of our many involuntary stoppages I thought to gather, or rather hew down, one of these great cactuses, but the Duke called out,

'Don't distress yourself about them; I'll send you some better ones from Trentham.'

The Abyssinian plains are infested with tarantulas. This plain is also sprinkled with Arab villages of the friendly Habab tribe, the men of which wear numerous small platted tails of hair. These villages swarm with children, the younger ones naked. Their bee-hive-shaped huts are wattled with brush-wood. We now drove along the lower ridge of the rising ground to a village near Otumlo, where the hills begin. From here we could see the stone causeway that connects Massowah with the island of Taulud, and the long causeway, one kilometre long, connect-

* Note A, Appendix.

ing Taulud with the mainland. Here was General Géné's camp. He was here retrieving his name and rubbing off the tarnish of his former defeat at Dogali. Italy was licked in a fair fight; they called it a massacre because the Abyssinians gave no quarter. Here at this strong point of the Italian iron frontier we alighted and walked about the friendly, almost too friendly population. The children noticed which sorts of flowers I gathered, and offered me more. They looked very lively and intelligent, and took a deep interest in my sketch of the dwelling of the richest man in the village, an Arab, who lives in a square house built of stone, with overhanging windows of woodwork, and a triple-headed arch over the principal entrance with rosettes on each side. This house, like many of the bigger huts, has a neatly wattled enclosure round it. This is for the purpose of securing the domestic animals from the attacks of the numerous wild animals who prowl round the villages at night, and would otherwise do a good deal of depredation. The dwellings of the village altogether are superior to the hovels of the Egyptian fellahin. The Hababs are friendly, but Lieutenant San Marzano tells me the Italians do not trust them implicitly; they would at once betray or turn against them for profit.

Italy, say the Italians, is doing the work of England. England would not permit France or Russia to hold Massowah, as it might give them too strong a grip on the Red Sea. Russia always advances, therefore she must be allowed no port on the Red Sea, whence she might stride to India; so

England offered Massowah to Italy. Next week they think we shall offer them Suakin.

'We are so generous in offering anything that we don't want,' said his Grace.

Perim, they say, is really more important to us than Gibraltar. So it is, until the Persian Gulf route is made. Not Russia, not France may hold the Red Sea: only England or Italy. Suakin will be held for the same reason.

'Italy requires Massowah,' says young San Marzano, in the lofty manner of young Italy, 'therefore I am here. If I die, I shall return home the sooner.'

He says they consider England has been generous to them, not in giving Massowah, but in advising them that the enemy is a serious one. They do not want Magdala; Azmara suffices Italy.

It was too dark to drive to the causeways uniting Massowah to the mainland, so we hastened to the pier by Fort Abd-el-Kader, on the northernmost of the two nearly parallel peninsulas adjoining the island of Massowah. We drove as fast as the mules would drag us through the swamps and tidal water-courses, and arrived by nightfall at the camp, where the bugles were blowing and supper was being prepared for the troops. We drove as far as we could through the camp, and then walked to the pier, picking our way by lantern-light through the many obstructions of a camp, and the constructions belonging to the new pier and terminus. Lieutenant di San Marzano dined with us.

We were interested by this handsome young soldier, 'the young man of all the virtues, who did

not smoke. He tasted all our wines in boyish curiosity. 'He doesn't drink, either,' said the doctor, satirically. But he really did not take much alcohol, for the Duke's wines are not fortified; pure sherry and port, excellent, but in their mildest forms, just as they drink them in Spain and Portugal. The lieutenant was engaged to a young lady at Genoa. He showed us each in profound secrecy a locket containing hair and engraved with the English words, 'For ever.' Decay, he said, presented no idea to him. 'If I die I shall live in their' (Italy and his ladylove's) 'memory till time is no more.' The young artillery-man was excited somewhat with the prospect of speedily going into action.

'Oh, when *we* die we shall find seventy houris awaiting us on the other side,' said the doctor, who always dreamt of those seventy lovely women in the shrubberies of the Peris, meanwhile remaining a bachelor here for their sakes.

'The bird in hand is better far than ten that in the bushes is,' quoted Lady Clare.

The Knight of the Locket hoped he would not be compelled to take the seventy. 'Faithful to one,' was his motto. 'Je ne les connais pas, les soixante-dix de l'autre côté. Ah! I can't explain it, it is inexplicable; les tropes sont trop absolumina.' His French being Italian-French, he always softened the syllable *ment* into *ma*. How? Comma. 'Besides, I always sing the "Chanson de Retour." That is Garibaldi's hymn.' He sighed, as from a full heart: and no wonder, poor lad! His life altogether was pretty full just now. The New Year so close at hand

what would it bring to him? He had volunteered for African service because he wished to be with his father, the general in chief command here.

He was interested rather than astonished at the bagpipes, which are always played after dinner, when the yacht is in port. He knew the Neapolitan 'pifferari.'

General di San Marzano sent off a note to his son, telling him to 'make himself charming to these English people,'—which we assured, and re-assured, him he was doing—and also an offer of a special train for us to go as far as the outposts of the camp to-morrow. The Duke had only to name the hour that suited him.

Evening, fortunately, puts an end to the nuisance of the flies, which, like the other vermin of the country, retire to secure hiding-places to sleep. The patent punkah was fitted up for us at Massowah, which relieved the breakfast-table of the plague of flies, 'trying to make their living in an honest way,' as the Duke indulgently remarked.

We were to be called for soon after breakfast by Lieutenant San Marzano, to go by train to an advanced outpost at the end of the railway, nine miles (thirteen kilometres) off. They sent the general's boat for us, with awnings, manned by rowers in red jerseys, white pants, and blue kerchiefs. They were trained to a peculiar stroke, one long pull, and then a pause, *da capo*. We rowed to the Abd-el-Kader station, encircled by the blue-capped tents of the camp we passed through last evening at bivouac.

Till the train was ready, we took shelter in a large matted hut, with a tall pent-house all round, roughly colonnaded with timber, and shaded with matting, simple and cool, as the breeze could pass every way, and the hut was always shady at least on two sides. The beds—placed, for coolness, in the pent-house verandah—were made of nothing but matting. These precautions are necessary; for it was even now so hot in the sun that some sulphur-flowered plants growing by the hut were drooping already. Our friends found, on examination, that the special carriage it was intended we should have had was not ready; it had just arrived, incomplete, from Italy, and could not be put together in time; so they sent an ordinary military carriage forward for us. The line is a very narrow gauge, with iron sleepers for the rails. Strong-looking navvies were working on the line. The engineer of the line has two thousand men under him. Two-thirds of the water they use here is condensed. Two English condensing vessels that we used in Abyssinia are hired by the Italian government, though the ships still carry English flags. The Duke saw these condensing vessels before they went out to Abyssinia, and so we ladies would not let the Italian officers have the trouble of showing us over them—as they kindly offered to do—though their machinery is said to be very interesting. Each of the ships condenses one hundred and fifty tons a-day or more, yet they may not give a gallon of water away without an order from the admiralty.

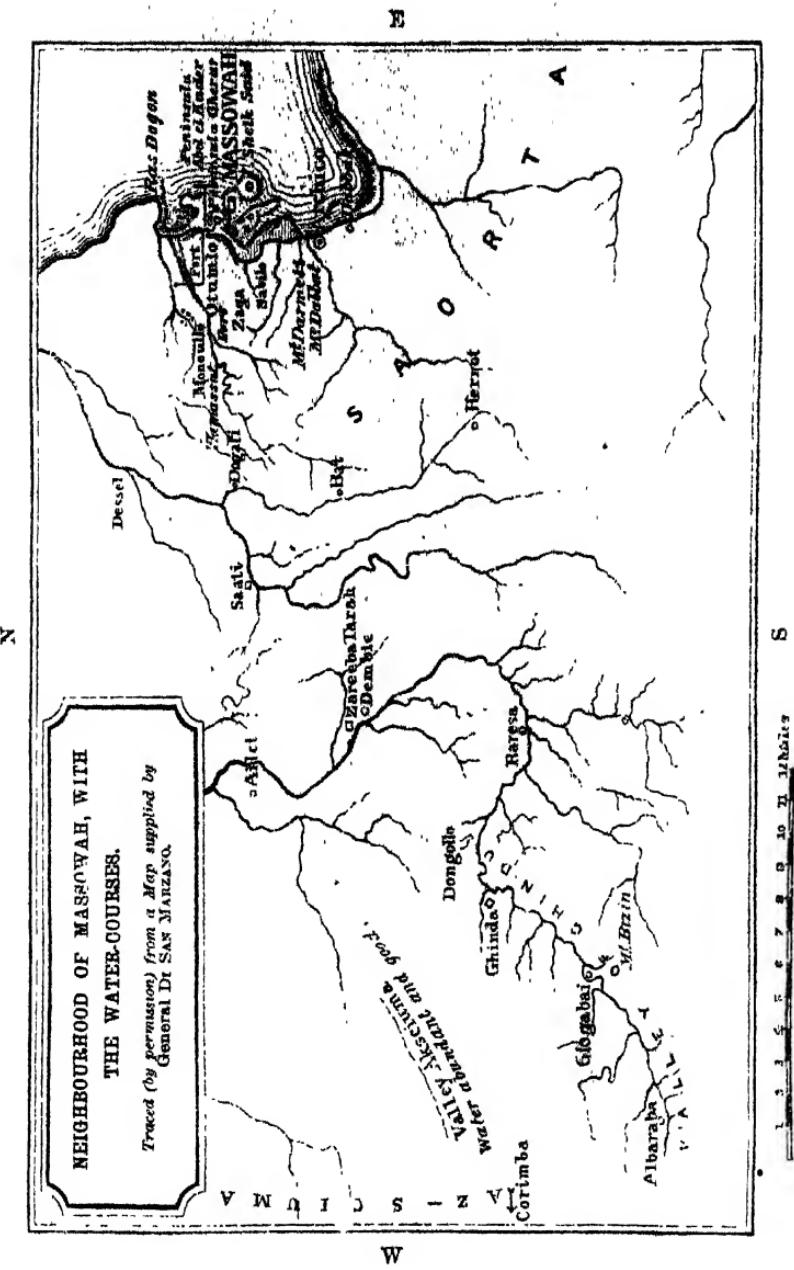
We found it so hot in our carriage, next the

engine, and open to it, that we had to shift to the third-class compartment at the back. I catalogued the objects of interest in my note-book as we went on. Item, military store dépôt and naval arsenal, also a fort erected at the shoreward end of the peninsula, called Abd-el-Kader from the tomb of a Mussulman notability of that name erected on it, and a good view of the causeway from Massowah to the mainland, with the blue mountain range behind it ; men bathing, at great risk of sunstroke, in the nearer lagoons, and in the distance opposite the town are advanced posts and tiny white towns of tents. The land here is parched and desert-like, except where the tidal streams gather into lagoons and lose themselves in swamps ; the arid plain is studded with dwarf tamarisk and the tall cactus-like euphorbia abyssinica, the latter usually overgrown with a parasitic plant. There are numerous small birds. A military ambulance is going across country, past a native village chiefly of rounded huts formed of sticks planted upright in the ground in a circle, bent together at the top, and covered with reed-mats. Here at Otumlo station is an oasis of palms and acacias walled round with mud. The station—that is, the open ground where the train halts ; for, of course, there is no actual station—swarms with little ebony-black boys, with eager, intelligent faces. The animal look predominates in their faces as they grow older. The little black mud-larks, bathing, cheer the train, just as British boys would do. Human nature is so much alike everywhere ; and boys will be boys. A camel wanders on the line : so much the worse for the

camel. The shrieks of the engine clear the line, and the camel stalks off, making a face at us.

The extensive native villages here are densely populated. The women wear abundant white drapery. Among a group at the well, I see several grand, majestic forms of women finely draped. Now we pass near the village we visited last night, Zaga, close to the camp where General Géné, at the head of the Regiment des Morts, commands the 'forlorn hope.' There are little gardens laid out round some of the tents, and clumps of palms, a kind of chamaerops. Near here is the Swedish mission-house, a neat stone house with a wooden verandah. It is now closed; an inscription declares, 'Fermata Missione Suedese.' The undulating land begins here; and up the hills march camels carrying timber, chiefly for constructions.

Abubulana station. Here grows much of that large, green-leaved plant, the calotropis, three to four feet high. Here is a regiment of fine black soldiers, and here we see the tall, straw, sugar-loaf hats of Piedmontese workmen busy at work on some solid buildings in the neighbourhood of a hill-fort commanding a narrow valley, above which numerous vultures are soaring. The scene reminds one of Aldershot, until a swarm of the Hababi come down to see the train; these natives, too, are employed as workmen to handle the pickaxe and drive camels; several of them are grey-haired blacks. The regiments here wear sand-coloured uniform; white is bad, they say, as being too conspicuous.



‘If you were out hunting in white, you’d catch nothing,’ says the young lieutenant of artillery.

The river-beds are now empty, though this is the rainy season, and five days since, they tell us, the rain ploughed up this nearer torrent-bed, which is now all channelled, yet dry. The scenery here is of sand-hillocks, with a peep of the ‘camp of our destination’ at the farther end of a district of rocky hills. There goes a galloping donkey to convey news of something of consequence to somewhere, the donkey’s long tail streaming in the wind with the speed. The flies divide our attention with the view of a hilly desert, with numerous monkeys clambering about the broken rocks and craggy peaks. The valley closes in here. A dry, baked country even now—what must it be in summer! Earthquakes, they say, are frequently felt; these blackened, broken cliffs look like the result of volcanic explosion. More blue-capped white tents, with the Italian flag on the surrounding earthworks, and dust-coloured tents on the stony land immediately round us, with mules picketed handy by. The mules are mostly brought from Poitou, the fodder likewise. The artillery-horses are Italian, the cavalry use Egyptian Arabs. There are also some pretty little Abyssinian horses careering about and curveting showily. These native horses are strong but small. The army camels are bought or hired here. Near the terminus are large hay-sheds with trusses of good hay. For fuel they burn coal and the dry and broken branches strewn about wherever there are trees.

On one of the farthest of the peaked hills closing

in the terminus is a large zareeba fenced round with brushwork. The telegraph extends to this point.

As we alighted, sundry and various generals and brigadiers were introduced to us, and they gave us ladies an arm to show us all about the camp. They made much of us. The Duke was a great friend of Garibaldi, and many of the senior officers knew him and were delighted to welcome him. The brigadiers stopped at the end of each one's command and handed us over to other officers of rank, who took us to the top of a hill whence we could see with a telescope the whole surrounding hill-country. Dogali was pointed out to us in the middle distance, the scene of the Italian disaster, a tragedy unendurable to the spirit of young Italy, which burns to wipe out the stain in victory, or at least in a solid success. The strikingly precipitous hills we see are the Abyssinian highlands. The fort, named Victor Emanuel, here at Monkullo, commands the whole of the valley. Sentinels and outposts were to be seen at different points on the hills beyond the camp; a sort of long-stop fielders. They were pressing on the construction of the railway to Saati, about eleven miles farther inland, extending the line and building an iron bridge over the torrent course. Crowds of natives were squatting about collecting stones to make the roads, which are, however, in some places supported by sandbags. Even the railway line is here and there constructed in this way. The drainage is of necessity carefully attended to. Captain Michelini was introduced to me, and, seeing me botanizing, he told me of a blue flower he called

a campanula growing a little distance off, and carried me off to see it. It was a blue papilionaceous flower, but no campanula, of course ; it is called torea or taurea, very pretty, and of an intense blue. The cultivated double variety is a handsome flower ; I saw it later, growing in Siam.

Captain Michelini was the hero of the hour ; he was almost the only Italian survivor of the fight at Dogali, at any rate the only officer. After receiving seven wounds, one right through his body, during the massacre, he crawled back on hands and knees from Dogali to Massowah, some twenty kilometres, and saved himself. He crawled for forty-eight hours in this forlorn condition—a wonderfully plucky thing to do ; he would not give up, but crept staggeringly on as long as he could and brought back the news of the engagement. To do this in such a climate, through a hostile country, required not only an iron will, but an iron constitution. When he came to the village of Toulout, he was on all fours. Ninety men were saved in all of the invading army ; of these but few were really Italians, and many have since died of their wounds. It is next to impossible for Europeans to live during summer at Monkullo ; the summer heat is sometimes as high as fifty centigrade degrees, one hundred and twenty-two degrees Fahrenheit.

Captain Michelini is about thirty-five years of age. He looked hearty and strong enough, and was eager to go at it again !

There was an unusually large gathering of wild and picturesque groups of natives lining the path as

we passed, on account of their being assembled for a fantasia, or native dance and festivity. We were taken to a long tent, shaded by a few acacia-trees, to bivouac with the officers.

'*À la guerre comme à la guerre*,' said they, apologizing for the roughness and simplicity of everything. 'We English are supposed to be so wonderfully luxurious even in the midst of war. At first they seemed quite horrified at the idea of taking ladies to see their tents and their cooking establishment ; it must, they thought, be so shocking to all our ideas of comfort. 'We Italians are so poor,' they said, 'you English cannot understand it.'

To me it seemed like a camp of old heroic times, this stern simplicity of life of these gentlemen, sharing in all ways the hardships of their men ; their manners so simple yet refined. They might all be descended from old Roman families, or, better still, from Roman kings, consuls and tribunes. Guerilla warfare has trained their leaders, many of whom are Garibaldi's soldiers. They are business-like about their work, and understand it thoroughly. We might gain many hints from their Spartan simplicity, we who almost always lose our first battles ; we can do nothing early in a campaign, until we have got rid of our superabundant impedimenta. Here there are few camp-followers, they have not even a war correspondent.

Colonel Barattieri, who presided at luncheon, showed us his work-room, a small tent of the sort called '*tente d'abri*,' sheltered by an arbour ; it was

quite simple, furnished only with a plain deal writing-table, a stool, and a camp-bed. So few are the necessities of life. A bath, which is such an absolute necessity in a climate like this, is not altogether an impossibility even here.

We had coffee in another dining-tent at some distance, passing on the way the cooking-fires, which reminded one more of going 'a-gipsying' than of our neat arrangements at Aldershot and Shorncliffe, which indeed are military cities, while this is but a camp in the wilderness. The rude camp-kettles, tin coffee-pots, horn cups, and other furniture are delightfully business-like, as is the whole of the camp; the troops are prepared to fight to-morrow, to-day it may be. Many of these fine fellows were with Garibaldi, and anxious to shake hands with his friend the Duke. His Grace wrote our names on the long deal table, and was afterwards asked to write them in a book also, as a memento of our visit.

An officer who had escaped from Saati, a red-bearded captain fluent in English, now convoyed us to another part of the camp surrounded closely by rocks abounding in game, partridges, and gazelles, affording sport to his greyhound, called Flirt, who has become thin as a skeleton in Africa; there are also monkeys and hyenas, and, more troublesome still, the fissured rocks afford cover to sharpshooters of the enemy, requiring constant watchfulness on the part of the Italian sentries.

In proceeding to where the train was waiting for us to return, they showed us a typical well of the country at Axheaf. These wells are simply and easily made; water is found anywhere at two mètres

deep, a hole is dug and surrounded by stones, and there it is. While at Massowah they have no water for hourly use, and most of the comforts of life here depends on water; here at this camp is plenty of water, and they pity their fellow-soldiers at Abd-el-Kader camp for having so little. An aqueduct has since this was written been formed from Monkullo to Massowah. The water-carriers of the villages are chiefly, if not always, women with goat-skin bags. The soldiers carry canvas water-pails. The Regiment dei Mori was drawn up for us to see, and some companies of Bersaglieri, with a merry native boy they called 'Diavolete' with fez and red jacket, the 'son of the regiment.' The train soon brought us down to the level ground. Between two native villages near we have a view of the Abyssinian Alps rising before us in the distance beyond the Plain delle Scimmie, as the Italians call it, where General Baldizerio is in command. Here are numerous Arab horses, and water-tanks and troughs for the horses to drink at. As it is but a single line, we have to wait here some time, the train drawn up on a siding at Barambara for a train that is bringing more troops to the front. Here we shake hands with several native officers in white draperies. They shake hands crossing the right hand over the left. One of these officers was once a great brigand chief; they took and tamed him here. He was introduced to the great English Duke.

Captain Framari and Captain Cipriani, naval men, who both spoke English, were here appointed to explain things to us. 'Chippy,' as Lady Clare calls

him, has come here to look for a bit of fun, for he really belongs to the fleet at home, only he volunteered for service in Abyssinia. He has a pointer with him, 'Ghost' is his name. This dog has been here seventeen months; always thin, he gets more and more wasted. What will be left of our poor Lappy by-and-by? 'Chippy' will soon get his bit of what he calls fun, for the army expects to fight in a fortnight. 'Chippy' is the only one among them all who does not take a serious view of what is really a very grave position. The Italians do not want to annex the country, they wish to open it up to their trade, and they intend to hold Massowah as a free port for their goods. It is expected that the present *ad valorem* duty of eight per cent. levied on all commodities entering the port, which has been hitherto devoted to local improvements, such as the bettering of the harbour and construction of wharves and piers, will, when once the colony is fully established, be remitted from goods of Italian manufacture, and only be levied on foreign articles of commerce.

In colonizing, the Italians and ourselves have, in the main, different objects. They want to create trade at home by finding a fresh market for it; we want more to find an outlet for our population. As the climate of the African littoral of the Red Sea makes it hardly worth our while to keep stations on it —now that we have managed to let the best opportunities of opening up trade by the Red Sea slip through our fingers, as we have shown such an absurd preference for the Nile route—our best plan for

getting our share of the future African trade is to make the Nile route practicable by rail and water. This part of Africa has a teeming population, and these people all want cottons; whether they have the means of paying for gay print, coloured beads, and perfumed hair-oil is another matter. Ivory and feathers seem abundant enough. Whether these goods would suit our book, I cannot tell; but the people are not like the lazy Malays and Siamese, they can be taught to work, as the Italians find; and, when taught, they do work, and that well. One can see by the few enclosures and gardens that the country is worth cultivating; while in some parts the rich, deep loam might equal in productive capacity the best alluvial ground in Egypt.

All this railway has been constructed in about two months. It will soon be opened as far as Saati. The railway sleepers here are of wood. For telegraph poles they use two native spears, spliced with thongs in the middle. They have both telegraph and telephone. The Italian plan of campaign is good: to fortify as they go, and never to get ahead of their railway. Consequently they have not had to fight at all, being never taken at a disadvantage, but always strongest at a given point.

The lengthening shadows of the men show that the greatest heat is past, otherwise we should not know it. 'See that nigger with a shot-silk sunshade, and so little on of value to shelter!' said the Duke to me. Indeed, the man wore drab rags of the scantiest, though to be dressy was in his nature. Perhaps he had borrowed the smart parasol.

The expected train is retarded three-quarters-of-an-hour; so our special is delayed. A letter of apology is sent to the Duke for the delay; he says these are the chances of war. We are as well entertained here as we could be anywhere else, and we have fine mountain scenery to enjoy. A pet regimental monkey is brought to salute us, and cut capers, and turn somersaults for our amusement. Some dromedaries sweep swiftly past us, moving at great speed. At last the train comes in, loaded with a company of soldiers, the engineers, and the band. There is to be a concert at Monkullo tomorrow night, to cheer the men. These Italian soldiers are fine manly fellows, and very glad to meet each other.

The Italians, twenty thousand men in all, have just been ordered to begin their forward march, and they are pouring to the front as rapidly as the trains can bring them. It is sad to think of those fine fellows being perhaps most of them dead before many weeks are over. The enemy are reckoned at eighty thousand men, and all good marks-men. The tragedy of Dogali is still on the minds of all of us.

There are very small engines on this small line; they shriek as loud as bigger ones. 'Pronti'! we are off. It is dark by the time we reach Abd-el-Kader.

After this very interesting excursion, we were glad to rest on board the yacht, sipping cider-cup in the mild moonlight. With what interest we shall watch the movements of these gallant troops. They are all in a capital state of preparation.

There are perhaps no objects of interest in Massowah itself, but we are glad we put in here ; we have seen a different life, widening our sympathies.

A young naval officer, Signor Ramognino, from the admiral's ship, dined with us, as well as Lieutenant San Marzano. The eagerness of the one officer made the other half sorry he should not take part in the action. Before our return—in five months—we reflected, it will be settled, one way or the other. It was frightful to think of eighty thousand savage warriors rushing upon the camp from these hills. The picture of the probable result, all 'in one red burial blent,' sickened me to contemplate. These skilled officers have taken every precaution, but numbers are against them, and, worse still, so is the climate.

A note was brought off again while we were at dinner ; the lieutenant must be ready to leave us early, when a boat would be sent for him. They are all ordered to the front early to-morrow. The enemy is moving forward, gathered in vast numbers on the hills ready to sweep down in force. Young San Marzano was again excited, not with wine this time, he scarcely touched any.

'It is not because we are at table, but because we shall be ordered off to-morrow,' said he.

I thought of the young lady he was engaged to at Genoa as I saw him fingering his locket ; I wished him well silently.

His father, the general-in-chief, was very attentive to us, though he was unable to call in person because of this sudden pressure. He sent us maps,

and even ordered ice for us, though it has been knocked off the last two days from the officers' allowance, as it is all kept for the hospital and necessity. The Duke refused to take it from the sick men. We are glad for their sakes that a ship with three thousand tons of ice is coming on Friday. This is Tuesday. The health of the Italian troops generally is excellent; as a winter climate the interior of the country is considered fine; very likely it is so on the hills, though the swamp ground and rotten coral shores of Massowah makes this the unhealthiest place on the Red Sea. Our troops were healthy throughout the Abyssinian war. We had hospital-ships for our men. We find it much cooler on the yacht than on shore.

The chief risk to health lies in the great temptation to bathe in the sun, as our men have foolishly been doing to-day. Next morning, just before we left Massowah, we heard that an Italian soldier, bathing, had just had his arm bitten off by a shark.

Happily for Italy, patience, prudence, and preparation have conducted the warfare of this season to a successful and bloodless end.

CHAPTER III.

TO THE FAR EAST.

En bas, sur le pont, la foule, les hommes entassés à l'ombre des tentes, haletaient avec accablement. L'eau, l'air, la lumière avaient pris une splendeur morne, écrasante ; et la fête éternelle de ces choses était comme une ironie pour les êtres, pour les existences organisées qui sont éphémères.— PILRIE LOTL.

OFF again : no post, and panting Care toils after us in vain ; not but what there was a telegraphic cypher prepared for certain contingencies.

We steamed out of the beautiful bay half encircled by mountains of Alpine character, the range ended by a lofty mountain sloping off at the end of the Bight of Archico. Coral reefs to port and rocky islets to starboard.

The sailors flapped the flies overboard ; so we soon got rid of that plague. Nowhere have I seen them so numerous ; not in Egypt, not in the valley of the Jordan, not in Seville, not in all three together, and these places I have thought hitherto the favourite haunts of flies.

Lappy, the dog, had his hair cut ; he looked cooler, but ludicrously ashamed of himself, with only a shoulder-cape left and a tuft at the tip of his tail.

We were out again in the seething blue sea, sending up its fountains of sparkling foam, and flying-fish fell in such numbers on the deck that we ate them for breakfast, and very good and delicate they were. Next day the rugged coast-line of the Red Sea closed us in on both sides, wild, rugged, conical peaks rising on both horizons, and then came the desolate hills round Mocha. We had a heavy sick-list on board, chiefly caused, it was thought, by the men bathing in the heat of the sun at Massowah.

On December 30th we saw the lofty, rocky coast of Yemen, with heavy clouds above the high table-land of the interior, and rugged, tortuous, peaked rocks and islands all volcanic. Beyond the rocks a low, sandy shore begins, with a dim, distant background of table-land cropping up into peaks occasionally. A large, rugged peninsula, looking like an islet, made of sharp, comb-like ridges of rock deeply serrated against the sky comes into view on the starboard quarter—it is Aden.

There are some raccs on, and the yarn runs that nobody is left in the town but the post-master and the telegraph-boy. We get our letters and the papers, full, as usual, of what we have not been doing. Diving-boy to our captain, 'I don't love you many very well,' when he threw him a broken saucer to dive for. Funny little brown, woolly-headed, grinning fellows in their small, hollowed timber tubs of boats, which they paddle, or upset, or jump out of, and do what they like with, all the while looking up at the steamers, and grinning and crying 'Have a dive'—abbreviation of 'heave for a

dive.' They readily find threepenny bits and half-quarter rupees at a depth of several fathoms. As the flags are hauled down at gunfire, a large steamer, full of soldiers in British uniform, came round and cheered the *Sans Peur* heartily; to this day we do not know why, but it was pleasant.

The Parsee shipping-agent and his servants bring fruit and flowers on board and a large bag of genuine Mocha coffee as presents; and Somali mats and coloured round baskets, with pointed covers, are brought for sale. We were large buyers until some experienced person told us not to spend our money here as we should get so much better things in India.

Bertha, the Swiss maid, is making herself cool cotton dresses, and bemoans her ill fate that she has 'no sewing-machine, no Tommy (dummy), no nosing.'

'No Tommy?' says the steward, inquiringly.

'It is a ship' (shape) 'to hang the clotheses on.'

Steward, still mystified, and rather severely,

'We have no room for Tommies on board.'

The sick men are recovering sufficiently to have songs, and send up rockets for New Year's Eve. The Duke went to a consular official dinner at Government House on Sunday, New Year's Day; and on the 2nd of January the Governor gave a ball and a dinner-party in his honour. Mr. Henley, the Peninsular and Oriental agent, gave us the kindest hospitality while the yacht was coaling, &c., as most of us were not up to enjoying the liveliness of Government House. We soon sailed for Marmagoa.

'Are you really going all that distance in the yacht?' is the question of everybody.

We had really made up our minds so to do, and why not? The *Sans Peur*, six hundred tons, is no cockle-shell.

'Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll!
A thousand sweeps fleet over thee in vain.'

Our luminous reflections on the grandeur of the ocean and the rest of our poetry are of too serious and metaphysical a nature to enter into a light work of this kind; for the present they must remain locked in the beautiful clasped albums that we naturally carried with us for the reception of such sublime ideas. This should have been by far the finest chapter of this book, and I cannot tell how it is that it has been left inedited. I cannot for the life of me think why; goodness knows there was time for no end of fine writing, yet the opportunity was lost.

Sunday, January 16th.—We were promised the sight of land for early this morning, and felt aggrieved when it was not to be seen. What was the use of our getting up so early?

At 10 a.m. the captain on the bridge, with a powerful glass, declares he can see 'the loom of it.'

'The loom. What is that? The outline?'

'Yes, the outline.'

'I should like to see the outline of India; an outline on a grand scale, that,' I thought, as I hastened up on the bridge to take my share of the sight. The captain's glass suits his eye only, for none of us can see anything but blue sea. By-and-

by the Duke cries, 'A branch of bamboo, that looks like land.' We feel like Columbus's companions, and rouse ourselves languidly; the bamboo is past, a weary look at the east shows no outline or loom, of land to us. I fling myself down and plunge into the 'Cruise of the Marchesa' once more. Land did appear before the evening of that day: we saw the red cliffs and intensely green vegetation of the Indian coast in the mouths of the rivers round the islet of old Goa; the tiny castle on the cliff-side eclipsed by the flag-staff, the cliffs themselves well-nigh eclipsed by the strong new breakwater built at Marinagoa, which is in future quite to eclipse old Goa harbour, if not old Goa itself, and new Goa or Panjim, to boot. The Portuguese governor, a naval officer, in full fig, came on board to call on the Duke, and in re-entering his boat his spurs (!) caught in one of the cross seats and he tumbled in, head foremost. We politely looked another way, and absorbed ourselves in the catching of some opal-grey semi-transparent fish, and some with canary-coloured tails, neither of which looked eatable. We did not try them at this time, but the latter sort we bought and ate on our return, when we had better appetite.

Several excursions were made to Goa, visiting the five Portuguese churches, dating from the end of the sixteenth-century, and the relics of St. Francis Xavier, whose life we had all been reading—and a perfect life it is!—and seeing the old houses where oyster-shells are used in the windows instead of panes of glass. I was ill, I had been so ever since I left Massowah, and was unable to do more than

envy the others, and let myself be carried up in a doolie to the Traveller's Bungalow on the hill. The air is so much fresher up here, and one escapes the coaling. The pathway up is lined with most vivid verdure of strange trees ; it is as if all nature were painted in unmitigated emerald green ; it would not come well into a picture, people would exclaim, 'How unnatural !' I suppose it is the intensity of the light appearing through the translucency of the leaves, as well as the sunlight developing a vast amount of chlorophyll. Explain it as one may, it is unnatural, there is a boat greenishness about the foliage in this and some few other places in the tropics where there is red or orange-brown soil that makes it like the foliage one sees at the theatre. Still it is refreshing to look at after many days at sea. The hill-top here is a wide level from whence one can see sunset and sunrise, and a fine view over land and sea. Glimpses of blue sea shine up through every break in the foliage far below, soothing and beautiful, the coast-line rippling with wave-like hills stretching out opposite beyond the bay, the landscape peopled with fine dark figures wrapped in transparent muslins of many colours, their dark skins smoothly polished like bronze. No one here speaks a word of English. The doctor coming up frequently to look after my welfare puzzles them a good deal with his orders.

The bungalow is meant for travellers who bring their own provisions ; it supplies beds, baths, soda-water, tables and chairs, and cane lounges of all kinds in the verandah. Some one up here keeps

ducks, nice fat ones too. I lived upon duck exclusively, and the Duke sent me up wine from the yacht. Marmagoa, being a new settlement, is ill provided with market produce. The engineers of the new line kindly sent me milk in a soda-water bottle. As they kept cows, they lent us milk each day ; we called it lending, because in no other way could the transaction have been made. The only milk the steward could buy was buffalo milk, and that in very small quantity.

‘Haven’t you got any beef?’ asked Herries, querulously, of a fine man in pink muslin commanding a boat-load of empty baskets.

‘Yes, sare ; young beef, sare.’

It was buffalo veal.

‘Come weal, come woe,’ says Herries, groaning.

My great loss was the sight of the romantic scenery on the new line of railway as far as Dhárwár, whence it goes on to Bellary, where it joins the main line to Madras. The Duke and I had been very eager to travel over this line, which his Grace is deeply interested in. This new part of the line was not yet open, but it could be travelled over by trollies, and the chief engineer kindly sent for a saloon carriage for my use as an invalid. The plan had been for us to cross India from Marmagoa to Madras, while the yacht went round by Ceylon ; and much I longed to cross India, the Italy of Asia.

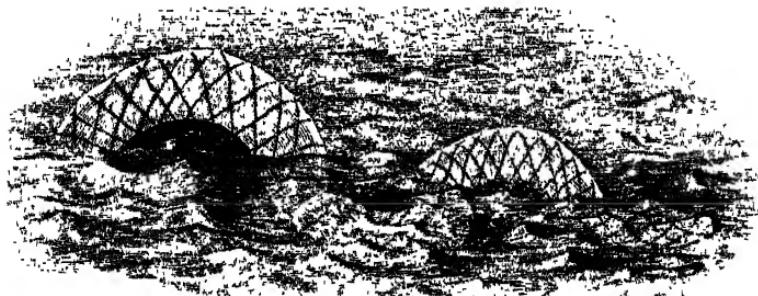
We heard the engineers talk of the wild charms of Castle Rock, and the fine scenery of the ghauts ; and when I saw Herries got up like a complete

sportsman, and the whole party setting off in the spirit of adventure, I felt it hard that I could only look on. The captain said sympathisingly to me, ' You know what the yacht is, but you don't know the other journey.' Lady Clare was very anxious for me to go, but the doctor strongly advised my not attempting it, as the engineers' bungalow at Castle Rock was ten miles from the rail, and only to be reached on horseback, and the ladies would have perforce to sleep in the train. The engineers said it would be madness for me to try to go by rail, as there are as yet no stations nor preparations for travellers, and the country was all savage rocks or jungle, with not a civilized house before Dhárwár, at the end of the second day's journey. They were exerting themselves to get all ready for the opening of the line at the end of the month, and had sent orders to Bomin-bay to supply the ceremonial feast, when Lord and Lady Reay were to ' inaugurate' the line with its terminus and port at Marmagoa. By-and-by this will be an important place, as, besides opening up Central India to the west, it will take the quick traffic of Madras, and probably much of that of Calcutta. They set off on the expedition, and I was carried down in a doolie to the yacht, just halting to gather some branches of a very striking white-tasselled flower growing by the winding path. The engineers sent me flowers for the yacht, and everyone in Marmagoa seemed to wish to make me comfortable.

While they are washing the anchor and weighing it, which takes time, for we carry one hundred

fathoms of anchor-chain, which weighs four tons, I make acquaintance with the new happy family on board.' Besides my old fellow-travellers, the Lapland dog, and Jacko the monkey from St. Kitts, and the rabbits, there was a new monkey on board, and there were two piglets, the funniest things, like miniature wild boars, sitting habitually in an attitude like the Florentine wild boar in bronze, and two melancholy kids from Marmagoa, too thin to live, or even to be slain for any useful purpose.

We had lovely weather for steaming down the Indian coast, and the captain was able to carry us close in shore, so that we had a fine view of the red coast-line of Travancore and the lofty chain of the southern Ghauts. I did not lose all the sights and tropical wonders by coming this way, for on Sunday, January 22nd, I saw from the bridge, as I sat up there as usual for an hour or so before sundown, a large luminous serpentine form, which rose slowly out of the water in two large curves (like two arches of a low bridge), letting me see distinctly the large diaper pattern marked on the flattened silvery sides



of a huge snake. I had my note-book in my hand, and rapidly sketched off its markings and its out-

line, as much as I could see of it on and under the water. The great size and luminousness of the creature were its chief characteristics, besides the flattened sides ; I could not see either extremity, nor do I remember distinguishing any fins, but the curves I saw were, as I judged, together about half as long again as our deck-house, and I saw it at about two hundred yards off. No one was on the bridge at the time ; I often had it to myself at that hour ; I called to Mr. Butters, but by the time he came the creature had disappeared, which was unlucky for me. The captain told me large sea-serpents were not uncommon in this part of the Indian Ocean. My own conviction is that this was the sea-serpent, which I had hitherto looked upon as fabulous ; the best authenticated case I had hitherto known was the sea-serpent seen at Haulbowline, which turned out to be a long lawyer from Cork taking a swim. Since then I have been told of what I believe to be genuine cases, the most convincing being one seen in Scotland, off Dunrobin Castle, where the Duke of Sutherland's secretary and the minister of the parish and his family all saw what they affirm to be the great sea-serpent. My sea-serpent story is true, ' true as taxes is, and nothing's truer than them. ' *

For all this excitement the sea-passage, though restful, was monotonous in addition to the long swim from Aden to Marmagoa ; the heat was great, the crimson flame of sunrise over India, the dazzling fiery light looking as if ready to devour and consume the land, gave one at times a feeling of abso-

* Note B, Appendix.

lute awe, almost of horror. The month was wearisomely long. Spin, spin, oh globe, spin round and round ; twirl, dervish globe, and bring us quickly out of this horrid torrid zone !

The meals were monotonous, of course ; the bill of fare is not large in the tropics ; it is fowls every day, chick, chick, chick, chick, always ; and such fowls !—tiny yet tough as shoe-strings, though the Duke's *chef* is able to explain that away if anybody can. Our experienced steward having gone overland to Madras, we were badly found, as Herries had thought to the last that all of us were going by rail, and as was hardly in any case to be helped after the long voyage, for nothing could be got at Marmagoa, no fresh fish, no meat, and many of the tinned provisions had gone bad, burst, and been thrown overboard, causing a sinell and a scarcity. The milk, such as it was, genuine juice of the buffalo, and the ice had come to an end ; a large quantity of provision goes bad just as soon as less if there is no ice to keep it in. There is next to nothing left to cook ; soon I fear 'we must eat we ;' I said so, and put on a fiercely hungry look. The captain said blandly he was most willing to oblige in any way. It appeared we had eaten the toughest of the captain's mutton already, and every roast duck consumed on board had been his. I sharpened the paper-knife ominously, and drew the blade across my finger. No, fat Joe must be eaten first, I reflected, and refrained.

The look-out men reported the sight of Adam's Peak--and none too soon ; it saved Joe's life. Of the piglets, one had died, the other had already

been killed, 'to save its life'; the sylph-like kids and the rabbits had disappeared, whether I know not. The captain had no roast ducks left. But later in the day nothing was to be seen of Ceylon; it was wrapped in the white mountain clouds.

We had not long to wait. Before us was the lowland of Ceylon, a white strip of shore, with green trees, and moderately high hills rising behind them, a town and wharfs, and plenty of shipping. Cingalese, with shiny hair held back by round combs, in rickety 'cata-marans,' flocked round the yacht all clamouring. It was just touch and go at Colombo. After taking in provisions and coals, we weighed anchor, and steamed round the island, whose hills look low after the southern Ghauts. Point de Galle is a pleasant-looking place, large and white, set in groves of coco-palms, with a background of blue hills. We always kept well within sight of Ceylon. What a wilderness of coco-nut forests! Clouds veil the high lands of the interior.

The Dutch system of forced labour caused the planting of coco-nut-palms along this western coast, which, 'so late as 1740, was described by Governor van Imhoff as waste land, to be surveyed and divided among the people, who were bound to plant it up. At the end of last century, when the British superseded the Dutch in the possession of the maritime provinces of Ceylon, the whole of the south-western coast presented the unbroken grove of palms which is seen to this day.* In sailing

* J. FERGUSON.—The only vestiges of Dutch rule remaining in the island.

up the eastern side of Ceylon, the profile of the mountains on this side shows the Monk's Hood as a marked outline; and as we proceed the hills at a distance look like a succession of monks' hoods coming on like waves. The world, as seen from on board ship, is made up of sea and outlines, or profiles of the land.

We anchored at Madras early on Friday, the 27th of January. The pier and breakwater built round the port exclude the famous surf; so the palmy days of the catamarans are past. We hear the Duke is staying somewhere about five miles from here. The captain went off to report the yacht's arrival. I long to hear their adventures. Herries came on board. He looked sadly pulled-down from the dandy sportsman who started from Marmagoa. He weighed something like twenty stone when we left Brindisi; his weight now, he said, with a melancholy air, was under seventeen stone. He had had a touch of fever.

‘Any tigers?’

‘Only one tiger, ma'am. I saw the tail of him, and I ran; leastways, it couldn't have been less than a cheetah.’

‘Scenery?’

‘I didn't see any scenery; it was all rocks and jungle.’

He was evidently fastidious in his tastes. He went off to look after his subordinates, and he blew them up roundly.

It is strange to contrast the dashing Herries who went off to the hills in such a jaunty manner, in

dazzling inufti, with his gun, and poetry in his heart, and the forlorn Herries who returned, fever-stricken, to the yacht, with bad language on his lips.

The journey across India does not seem to have been an unalloyed pleasure. Herries would not do it again for any money.

The Duke and Lady Clare came on board about noon. They were staying with her brother, a leading barrister at Madras, and his wife, at their large house, a little way out of Madras. I had been invited to stay there too, but when I heard Mr. Michell's youngest child had died on the very day of Lady Clare's arrival, and the baby's funeral was this morning, I felt I could not intrude upon the sorrowing parents; and I stayed on board the yacht. This sad event damped the pleasure of the whole family upon Lady Clare's arrival.

We now heard more about the journey. There did not seem much of interest to record beyond Bertha's fright at seeing what she called a cobra in Lady Clare's room at Dhárwár; she described it as having four rudimentary legs and a bushy tail. This turned out to be a squirrel; but the terror it caused was equal to a real cobra. Dhárwár was a pleasant rest after the hardships of Castle Rock (which was a rock without a castle); but the bungalow at Dhárwár could not accommodate the whole party with beds, so most of them were accommodated with mats, which are—ahem!—coolness itself; and being high-hill country, they found it cold with no blankets. The special trains could not wait, as it was expected they would do; so most of the party

got no luncheon, only the experienced Herries caught up a fowl, and rushed off with it, and a bottle of claret under his arm, as they sped to the train. Worst of all, none of the party had any money. Herries had none left; the Duke had forgotten to bring his cheque-book; Lady Clare had none. So, while ordering special trains galore, they laughingly said they begged their way across India.

The bills came in afterwards, though. How true it is that there is something altogether unpleasant in the misfortunes of one's friends. I chuckled inwardly at having seen as much as they, and bragged about the sea-serpent, a story which I could get none of them to take at par. A black man styling himself 'Lord High Admiral of Her Majesty's catamarans' has come on board, in a patched coat and battered cocked hat. He shakes hands with us all round, gets our signatures to his testimonials, also half-a-sovereign out of the Duke. 'I can't think what in the world for,' says his Grace. Rupees being known to be changing hands like this, numerous articles for sale and barter were pushing off in boats to the yacht; but now the advice was, 'Don't buy much at Madras, you will find things of so much greater interest at Singapore.' A stuffed parrot-fish, bottle-shaped, with a bird-like beak, looking very much like a made-up article, though it was genuine, is bought and hung in the deck-house till it can be placed in the museum at Dunrobin.

The doctor ordered a victoria for me to drive to the botanical gardens, which are open at five p.m. To avoid the slippery steps of the pier, we went

ashore in a large surf-boat. The men carried the doctor ashore on their backs; I was seated on a board and lifted ashore that way. The gardens cover eighteen acres; their leading feature is the forest trees, though these are of no great size. The bauhinias with the double leaves, typifying the two Bauhin brothers, were interesting as well as fine trees. It was curious to me seeing outdoor hot-houses, only sheltered and shaded against wind and too fierce sunshine.

We drove round by where the band plays of an afternoon, by way of a river, bridges, and more gardens (Madras is for the most part made of gardens), and thence back to the port by way of the 'Black Town,' and bazaars which look gay and theatrical when lighted up.

A party of ladies came on board the *Sans Peur* to tea.

We stayed several days at Madras, which is not, however, a very interesting place. During our stay was held the great native festival consequent on the total eclipse of the moon. A fine procession with nautch-girls, specially educated for the temple services, covered with costly jewels and bearing wreaths of flowers. These dancing-girls are very graceful and elegant, and of a highly superior class to the ordinary nautch-girls. This festival lasted throughout the following day, beginning early in the morning with a great public washing in the surf.

The Duke invited Mrs. Brooke Michell to make the journey to Siam with us. Mr. Michell thought the six weeks' trip would do her good, and advo-

cated her going with us ; but, having lost her pretty baby, she half-feared to leave her little boy, now become doubly precious. I hear we are to put in at Johore, as an invitation has been received by the Duke from the Sultan of Johore. The stores are all on board, a plentiful supply, with ice enough to make the fish and flesh keep for a long time. A lot of bananas hanging up near the foremast gives a tropical look to the ship.

Mr. and Mrs. Brooke Michell came on board to lunch and say farewell. As Lady Clare and her sister-in-law were driving down to the pier with the Duke, the carriage horses ran away ; a rein broke, and the native coachman was flung out into the road. The Duke scrambled from his seat on to the box, took the only rein, and guided the horses against a wall to stop their mad career ; they broke a lamp-post, and that was all, the carriage was not much injured, and its occupants were safe ; but it was a moment of considerable danger.

We left Madras in the afternoon of the 30th of January, keeping up a good speed, which never slackened day nor night, filling us with what Loti calls 'La notion d'un éloignement effroyable qui augmentait toujours.' Siam seemed still so far off that India felt quite homely in comparison. The deck-house was arranged as a sleeping cabin for Lady Clare and myself, the curtains and beds being removed by day.

Atmospheric effects were nearly all that we had to see in crossing the Bay of Bengal ; we sat on the bridge to watch the sunset—nearly always the

tamest of spectacles—and the moon-rise, and Magellan's cloud, a nebula supposed to be vertical over the Straits of Magellan, as the pole star is over the North Pole.

Poor Jacko died, the West Indian monkey that we all loved. We were so sorry to lose the brightest thing on board the ship. Twenty of the green parrots belonging to the men flew overboard. These birds are put in slight bamboo cages, and easily eat their way out. In the afternoon of the 3rd of February the high land of one of the Nicobar Islands was visible, and on the 4th we passed between a lofty island, wooded all over, called Pulo Way, and the town of Acheen on Sumatra, whose broken undulations rise gradually into a fine conical hill called the Golden Mountain, in form like Vesuvius, but more than double the height of the Italian volcano; with a low green slope stretched out to its base like the Schattenberg under Mount Pilatus. Sumatra then trends away to the westward, and we lose sight of land.

'Here's a boat-load of shipwrecked sailors; we must rescue them.' We were all eager for some excitement, shipwrecked sailors were just what would suit us. The Duke went below to fetch his gun—we stared; did his Grace think they were pirates? I do not know that we should have objected to pirates, anything for a change. We eyed them eagerly with the glasses—it was a banana stump laden with boobies. It looked just like a boat-load of sailors. The Duke fired two shots, but the birds were gone. We looked somewhat like boobies too.

The sea here was very phosphorescent, all full of sparkles and lines of green fire breaking from the bow. 'Breakers ahead,' called out the seaman on watch at the bow; again we all flew to the glasses, night-glasses this time, and soon we passed a phosphorescent mass that smelt ill and exploded. At sea in the tropics more than ever does one feel night to be as Jean Paul calls it 'the great shadow and profile' (silhouette) 'of day.' The Southern Cross, the North Star, and the Plough were all on view at once, Orion too, of course; but like a man of fashion he is seen everywhere. The perspective of the Plough is flattened, the constellation is altogether out of drawing; but its seven stars are no larger than we see them at home. The upper and lower stars of the Cross are pointers to the South Pole. Tennyson and other poets who have not been in the tropics may sing of 'larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,' and mislead the public, but the further I go I see there is in reality very little difference in the general aspect of the stars between our skies and those of the tropics, and what little there may be is in favour of the north, and so said everyone out there—*who did not write books*—though I find people speak differently when they come home.

The time the stars looked largest to me was on that cold December evening when we arrived at Brindisi—and the one peculiarity I saw was the crescent of Hesperus as I saw it in the Red Sea; but that the Morning Star was observed to be wonderfully and unusually bright at about the same time in England

is attested by the numerous letters written to the papers on this phenomenon. It is a popular fallacy to suppose that the stars in the south look different from the stars as we see them : it is only that we look at them much on board ship, and gush over them very much on our return from abroad. We think we ought to see things as described, and so we cheat ourselves into the fancy that we do. It is the perspective of the constellations that is altered.

If I am scouted as one who tries to see the prosaic side of everything by destroying poetical illusions and making the beautiful ideals glide away, I know the cause of poetry is not furthered by ignoring truth, and we are less likely to see the beauties that are if we are always trying to see those that are not.

The sea-serpent is no illusion, but a vast and luminous fact.

February 6th.—Out two months to-day. The coast of the Malay peninsula visible all day, with low foreground shores and high land in the interior. We have now, this afternoon, green sea and a purple land.

The low green islets and broken, but gentle, sort of scenery seen on approaching Singapore reminds me more of Sweden than anywhere else. Soon the island scenery becomes more home-like ; it is not oriental, but in this cool breeze one could almost fancy oneself steaming near the Plymouth coast.

‘ Which will your Grace like to go in at, the Peninsular and Oriental wharf, or the harbour ? ’

‘ Oh, the harbour at first, I think.’

'Up with the flag,' shouts our captain, and the long swim is over.

Now appear long lines of warehouses at Singapore, and the spire of a church more home-like still, and now we are swinging at anchor out in the breezy harbour.

Mr. Cobham, one of Her Majesty's commissioners in Cyprus, whom the Duke had invited to travel with him, came on board with his friend, Mr. Swan, the engineer who was to accompany his Grace to Siam to consider the country for the proposed railway there. These two gentlemen had made friends with each other at Singapore, and found by chance that they were both waiting for the same person. It is true he was a big person, and they were not likely to miss him. The Duke was glad to welcome Mr. Swan and have some engineering talk about Malaya.

In travel the Duke is always on the look-out to see if comparison with other countries can offer any suggestions of improvements in our existing machinery, or if the application of English capital can benefit a colony or further British influence abroad. The Duke, a conscientious landlord, always puts his enforced exile to profit for self-instruction, and, chiefly, to benefit his people by the hints he gathers. This is a thing that the workers cannot do for themselves. It requires leisure and capital. Dukes, it seems to me, are more necessary now than ever; *dux* in war formerly—now leaders of peace.

Mr. Cobham had, on his outward journey (after attending the marriage of his niece in India), been

travelling through India and Burmah. Darjeeling was the finest place he had seen ; he was never tired of expatiating on the magnificence of its scenery. Being in the diplomatic service, his rank was less fully understood by some of the less experienced port authorities in the far-east than if he had been a general officer or a naval captain. At one place the officer in command at the port, 'a thorough good fellow,' who took to Mr. Cobham at once, showing him about and wanting to pay him all due honours, said, heartily,

'I don't know how many guns you are entitled to, but, by Jove, as many as you choose to ask for, you shall have.'

Ranking with an admiral, he was entitled to a salute of thirteen guns.

We are invited to a ball on board H.M.S. *Orion* to-night, and hospitality is offered us at Government House ; but the Duke thinks, as we are making but a short stay at Singapore, we had better be independent and remain on board the yacht.

The Sultan of Johore is away on the hill at Penang, so it is as well we did not propose to stop at Johore until our return. The season is advancing, and the sooner we are at Bangkok the better. People here are very hospitable, we have several other invitations. A steam-launch is to come for us at one o'clock, that we may be taken to see the town of Singapore ; but what a frightful time of day for pleasuring just under the equator !

We lunched at the Raffles Hotel, where a Malay luncheon had been ordered for us. Mr. Swan, who

knew Malayan customs, told us what to choose and how to eat it, and peeled mangosteens for us.

After this we went shopping with a couple of carriages at our heels, curio-hunting among the divers inferior Chinese shops near the club. Mr. Cobham, who is a connoisseur, hinted we had better not waste our money on this trash, which is to be had just as good and as cheap in London. 'At Siam we shall find curios and novelties,' he said. It seemed as if things worth buying fled before us at every port.

There is one good Japanese and Chinese shop in Singapore, and presently Mr. Swan took us there. A yarn was brought down to us of an inhabitant to his friend from San Francisco, breaking off his talk on business :

'The Duke, come along and see the Duke.'

'Dook, dook be d——d, what's that?'

The New Worldling could not take into his mind what sort of modern improvement that could be.

We went to the Cricket Club pavilion, where we had tea in an upper verandah overlooking the long green, which has the sea rolling in on one side, and on the other hand are the cathedral, and lines of large villa-residences and public buildings all set in greenery. Here on the short, fine turf the game of cricket was being played as energetically as in England.

This upset my preconceived notions of the tropics; to wit, the Zoo at large, roaming about in the palm-stove at Kew—magnified—or in the Botanical Gardens in the Regent's Park. I perceived this would have to be

modified. This reminds me that we next drove to the pretty Botanic Gardens here, and round by the populous and amusing China town; all set in as strange and foreign vegetation as any in the Botanic Gardens themselves. It was at Singapore that I had really my first sight of tropical vegetation, for I saw little of India's luxuriance; it is, as Darwin says, like a visit to a new planet—a new heaven and a new earth, one sometimes feels it to be. The wealth and novelty of flowers and palms, rightly called by Linnaeus princes of the vegetable kingdom, and all the splendour of the equatorial sap. The coco-nut, the areca, and the sugar-palm struck us with admiration, and we viewed with curiosity the Singapore Licuale palm, which we already knew in the dried state as the Penang lawyer. Most striking of all, perhaps, is the well-known traveller's tree, or pilgrim's palm, as it is called, from Madagascar, which is not a palm at all, but allied to the plantains; it takes its name from having a receptacle for water at the foot of each broad leaf that forms its stately fan. This fluid is drinkable, but it is generally full of ants and other small insects.

The streets and roads, even in the Chinese quarter, all have English names, clearly written up on signposts, or on blue labels as in France and England. This China town swarms like an ant-hill with the yellow race, who appear industrious to the last degree. Chinamen here are always carrying loads in their pairs of baskets, or pails, slung on a bamboo across the shoulders. Exception: when not busily carrying about something, they are being shaved.

There are plenty of jinrickshas, or 'rickshas' as they call them here, a sort of small, gaily-painted hansom cab drawn by a man between the shafts; these are all drawn by Chinamen, some of them extremely fine men, often admirable models for a ~~worrier~~ in bronze. They run up hill or down, often drawing a family-jam of Chinese father, mother, a lot of children, and sometimes their aunts and uncles as well. The roads are admirable here in Singapore, and, being a small island, of course distances are not great; but it is surprising what weights these 'ricksha' men will draw, the distances they will run, and their amazing endurance. Major Knollys says he knew two of these coolies run about sixty miles in less than thirteen hours, drawing a load of nearly three hundred-weight, and this on a bad road. They are said to suffer much from heart-disease; we cannot wonder at it.

The 'ricksha' is so cheap a conveyance that it successfully competes with the tramway, which is laid down round the level coast road from the principal steam wharfs to the farther end of the town. The Chinese are very fond of travelling by 'ricksha', while they will not afford themselves a ride in a gharry, a sort of tropical 'growler' with jalousie blinds. Lastly, we drove to the Peninsular and Oriental wharf, whither the yacht had been taken round to coal; and, the coaling already over, she now lay alongside the wharf in an arm of the sea. We took in very little coal, as our object was to be light enough to float over the bar at the mouth of the Menam river in Siam. Natives with

boat-loads of beautiful shells, and the red musical coral of the Indian Ocean, for sale, came flocking round the yacht. Fruits too* were brought on board. We relished the mangosteens, the favourite fruit in the Far-east. One eats the soft, white inside pulp, that is like a snowball divided in about half-a-dozen sections, leaving the purple husk that one at first supposes to be the fruit, and the red pith which is not good. A basket of the fruit called 'dukos' was sent as a present. This fruit, though prized, is not equal to the mangosteen.

After dinner, Mr. Geiger, the Peninsular and Oriental agent, came with a large steam-launch to convey us to the ball on board H.M.S. *Orion*. The ship was tastefully decorated with flags and tropical plants, almost concealing the great guns. Captain Royse was extremely attentive, and showed us all over this magnificent ironclad. The popping of corks in the ward-room was as heavy as a cannonade. A newspaper reporter came early on board the *Sans Peur*, wanting to interview the Duke of Sutherland.

'You can't see him now; his Grace is in bed,' they told him.

'Oh! I don't mind that in the least,' was the eager reply.

'We do,' said the steward, emphatically.

Lady Clementi Smith, the very agreeable wife of the Governor of the Straits Settlements, sat by me the whole evening, and pointed out the celebrities, Chinese and otherwise, to me. Sir Cecil Clementi Smith invited the Duke and his party to lunch at Government House next day.

At one o'clock p.m., Major *Massey* came down to the wharf with the governor's carriage, with servants wearing turbans and fanciful scarlet liveries, to take us to Government House, which is finely situated on a hill at some distance out of the town. There was an army of servants, many of them in white muslin, with red head-dresses and girdles, on the steps to receive us. For dessert we partook of a remarkable selection of strange fruits, among them a fruit looking like a small potato with the skin on, with the pulp tasting like moist sugar—this has black flat seeds; another looking like a large prickly arbutus, the edible part like blancmange—in appearance, when peeled, it is like a plover's egg; and several others. Most of these fruits are like poor relations of the mangosteen. Sir *Cecil Smith* is fond of botany, and enjoys cultivating the fine gardens of Government House. We went out to look at a yellow-blossomed tree, with flowers growing directly out of the stem, the thick bark-stem of the large tree. It is supposed to be a *jonesia*. This curious tree was not in flower when Miss *North* stayed here for two busy months, painting.

Government House is an Italian palace, commanding an extensive view all round, reminding me of the view from Harrow-on-the-Hill, painted in tropical tints; it has the same aerially blue distances covered with multitudinous vegetation. Mr. *Cobham* smiled, as much as to say, 'Ah! if you have not seen Darjeeling, you have seen nothing.' To see the coloured caladiums growing freely as if they were buttercups in the grass, was to me one of

the most wonderful things in the vegetation. I did not like to put my foot down on them—they are valuable at home. I felt like my own little boy did, when he used to step carefully between the ferns on Hampstead Heath. When the afternoon cooled a little, we took two carriages, and drove to the reservoir, a pretty artificial lake with raised borders with paths on them and plane-tree isles reflected clear; and then to the house of a rich Chinaman, Sia Liang Sia, who had invited us to tea. He spoke English perfectly, but he was thoroughly a Chinese, although, curiously enough, he had never yet been in China. He knew Europe well. He smiled as we sat by the table, with the smile that was childlike and bland, to see us enjoy our tea—a very pale-coloured liquid—it was 'a dream.' There were dishes of curious confectionery, and all the fruits of the country arranged with flowers, ferns, and, above all, roses. Singapore is too hot for roses to bloom well, but, as Sia Liang Sia said, a Chinaman cannot exist without roses, so he sends to the Flowery Land for fresh rose-bushes every year. Chinamen cannot exist without fish-ponds either, and tiny ornamental bridges, and general willow-pattern landscape gardening; so he has all of these, and open-worked traceried screens painted in white and pale porcelain colours all over his house as partitions to the rooms, with the few solid wall spaces hung with the Japanese pictures called *Kakemonos*, making the whole house one veiled aerial perspective set with flowers all about the open courts and pathways. Here he sits, in

azure silk raiment, and amuses himself and his friends with fishing for fat carp from his windows, and feeding them with dozens of slices of bread.

The green land beyond the blue channel where the yacht lies looks cool and refreshing with its dense foliage feathering to the water's edge, shading the shore 'whose shining sand,' as Camoens says, 'is painted with red shells from Venus' hand'; the bat's-wing junk sails of Chinese vessels, and white and brown British sails gliding along between the trees. For all its rich, ruddy tint, the soil is poor at Singapore, though land has increased ten times in value here in the last ten years; but the Liberian coffee thrives fairly well in the plantations. The branches, with their white orange-blossom-like flowers, clusters of berries, and large, bay-like leaves, are fragrant and delightful.

We waited for the mail, and before leaving Singapore we read in the *Straits Times* of the 6th of February that the Italian army in Abyssinia had arrived at Saati. So the rail is made thereto; we were glad to hear our friends were safe so far. Now we are ready to resume our 'meanderings,' and say 'Au revoir' to the 'Lion City,' which is its name in Malay; the name Singapore in Hindustani means 'Place of meeting, or of waiting,' from its good harbour.

CHAPTER IV.

A ROYAL CREMATION.

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—
 Summer isles of Eden lying in dark purple spheres of sea.
 There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,
 In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

TENNYSON.

As early as last October we had heard that we might possibly arrive in Bangkok in time to witness the cremation of a princess. We wondered how this could be. Was she given over by the doctors, or was she prepared, embalmed, or, if not, how could the ceremony be so long delayed? A still more solemn question with us was, should we get to Bangkok at all? It is not given to everybody to go to Bangkok. By this time even this question had been settled to our satisfaction, and we had already left Singapore, and were outward-bound for Bangkok.

The cremation was fixed for the 14th of February—that is, this was the first day of the ceremonial. It would be a pity to miss the commencement of the display, which we now heard was to be unusually grand. We left Singapore on the 9th of February at four p.m., to have daylight for the passage round

the headland, our captain being anxious besides to save the tide over the bar of the Menam river on the morning of Monday the 13th. He had timed himself to be there at seven a.m. precisely, after a four days' passage. Our skipper is a cautious man, who never prophesies unless he knows. He who never commits himself has now pledged his professional reputation on this precision. Meanwhile we have time to think. Who was this princess, for whom the days of mourning have so long been over? Who was her father, who was her godmother,—who gave her her long and high-sounding name? Had she a sister, had she a brother, and whom? Was this the Asian mystery?

A head-wind, as usual, when we want to get on; blue and breezy were the leading impressions of the few on deck. Some of the party had collapsed; Lady Clare sent to ask the captain to land her at the nearest lighthouse. He smiled; but, ever anxious to oblige a lady, he ran the yacht somewhat out of her course to keep her the better out of the roll of the sea. The China Sea has a bad name, and seems to deserve it.

We enter the narrow part of the Gulf of Siam on Monday morning, but, alas for our captain's jeopardised professional reputation, it is nearly noon, and we have not yet reached the bar. We have abundant time to admire the beryl-hued waters and look at the numerous varieties of poisonous snakes frolicking about therein—snakes whose bite is fatal in one hour, two hours, one day, two days, and so forth,—and to correct our preconceived ideas of the

land's profile; for, flat countries being now the fashionable scenery, we expected Siam to take rank with Holland or the Saône, and lo, it is mountainous, with a range of white cliffs and coco-palms fringing the long white beaches, and closer by us are numerous stake-nets, each stake tipped by a sea-bird. The lighthouse is in sight, but the tide is lost, and we must wait for the morrow; for no vessels of any size can cross the bar except at high tide, and we, drawing fourteen feet of water (even with a light lading of coal) require a full flood-tide. At low tide there is only three feet of water on the bar.

Our captain, pensive, as we lay all that day by the bar of Bangkok, oh! and we uncomfortable, as we flopped while we stopped on the bar of Bangkok, oh! We had braced ourselves up for a vision of glittering temples, etc., as per the books. Some of the party go off to seek Nirvana. Our captain low-spirited, he does not know precisely where we are. We think that now is the time to comfort him by suggesting that we should send up rockets as signals of distress, it would cheer him up a bit. But no, he seemed all the more worried. We looked out smart toilettes for the cremation ceremony, but our ardour was damped on reading in Bock's book, 'Temples and Elephants,' that the Siamese are adopting our English fashion of wearing a crape band round the arm for mourning. Shall we be expected to wear court mourning?

Four p.m.—Steaming valiantly, we have got into the right course at last. It seems the skipper took us into the channel of another river, not the Menam,

but the Mekong, and we have made a considerable angle to retrieve ourselves. This is the very place where Camoens was shipwrecked, where he says,

‘ And Mecon shall the drowning poetry receive upon its breast, benign and bland,

Coming from shipwreck in sad misery, ‘scaped from the stormy shallows to the land.’

This is not the only river named Mekong in these parts. Camoens with difficulty reached the shore on a plank, having lost everything but the M.S. of his poem. All other wealth for ever lost,

‘ Myself escaped alone,
On this wild shore all friendless, hopeless thrown.’

The inhabitants of the country relieved his wants, and he thanks them in the stanza beginning,

‘ Oh, gentle Mecon, on thy friendly shore,’ etc.

He remained here some days waiting for a vessel to take him to Goa, and while here he wrote his paraphrase of the 137th Psalm, ‘ By the waters of Babylon,’ in fifty-seven stanzas. He hung his harp by this far-off river.

The cremation being fixed for to-morrow, we shall only just see it, and that is all ; or we may be only in time to come out with the rest. The sight of the *Borneo* steamer aground cheers us all ; we are not stuck in the mud and lying over on our side like her ; our dinner-table is horizontal, thank the powers.

We signalled to the lighthouse for a pilot, and telephoned to friends in Bangkok to expect us, and dropped anchor for the night. We were to move on at daybreak, and all of us meant to be up at five so as to see the fine temples at Paknam, in the

entrance to the river. And we were so, notwithstanding that we had played music till late into the night. The rattling-up of the anchor is enough to wake you from a swoon or trance.

‘Is there coffee going?’ cries the Duke down the cabin stairs. I had squeezed some tea out of Bertha’s tiny pot, and offered it. We stopped to take some one aboard. Screams of delight from the deck-house. Lady Clare welcomed her brother, Mr. Edward Michell, now resident in Siam, whom she had not seen for years.

‘Make more coffee now these gentlemen are come aboard,’ cries the steward.

‘Who’s come aboard?’

‘His Royal Highness, Prince What’s-his-name,’ says Herries, skilfully fencing with the name Devawongse, &c., &c., Prince of Siam, whose portmanteau I see on the saloon-table labelled with the prince’s name in Roman capitals. But it was not the prince himself, but an official come to welcome the Duke to the country, and to show him that a palace and preparations were ready for his reception in Bangkok.

The birds sing in the early morning as if they knew it was St. Valentine’s Day, and we sail through pleasing scenery of tree-fringed shores, with a spiry white pagoda on an islet, winding round this fanciful building with the deep curves of the stream. It is charming to glide over these lovely sheets of water, the broad ribbon of the Menam fringed with areca palms. The mangroved banks so brightly green, like spring-green May at home, May in the inorning mist; with red-brown peaked roofs of

stilted dwellings, or boat-houses peeping here and there, and quaint, high-pitched roofs of temples, while through the grove glimmers an occasional white pagoda, or a flagstaff with the banner of the white elephant. Barring these latter objects, the scene reminds me of Holland, a full, broad river about three-quarters-of-a-mile wide, with a leafy shore, only the richer verdure here is more intense in its greenness. And thence our thoughts fly to friends at home, that is, those of us who have no brothers here fly off; and we alter Hood and quote softly: 'To think that you're in England and I here in Siam.'

'Up with our six-legged elephant,' is the cry, and the Siamese flag flies bravely at the foremast of the *Sans Peur*, in honour of the Lord of the Universe and of the White Elephant; the six-legged white elephant, the trunk and tail—i'faith a royal tail!—by the bunting artist look like extra legs, 'complimentary legs,' Herries called them.

The local colour of the Menam—the Mother of Water—is a brownish green; it is full of vegetable matter. A boat conveying a yellow-robed priest across to a small pagoda is rowed by two men standing, in Venetian style, with just the Venetian touch.

The numerous boat-houses are most ornamental, shaped like miniature wooden temples, peeping out among the various palms, dwarf and tall, feathery bamboos and hundreds of sorts of trees new to me, but all of such a May-like green, the moist, cool, but heavy air laden with vegetable odours as of blossoms.

The brown paddy-fields will likewise be green in a few days. One sometimes sees a covey of rooks above them. Paddy is the unhusked rice. Here and there a boat shoots into a branch river or canal. In one place a canal a mile long cuts off eleven miles of the river. We approach the city. The number of wooden houses floating on bamboo rafts increase.

There is plenty of shipping, and the gondolas (they call them 'gondolas') are multitudinous, many of them filled with fruit, or flowers for temple offerings. It is a gay scene, there is no end of colour; the foreign consulates and the shipping, including a Siamese gunboat and two yachts, are all dressed with flags; the elephants on the red flags certainly run to legs. It is the Chinese New Year, and the numerous Chinese coasters are beflagged. It is the last of the three days that the festival lasts. During these days the Chinese servants knock off work, or at best beg their mistresses to have tiffin instead of dinner; thus there is three days general discomfort for every dweller in the land. The palm-thatched, peaked roofs are very marked in their curved outline, and the shop-fronts, fixed or floating, form a continuous river-side bazaar and market, above which are quaint spires, some of them gilt and glittering, and prachedees, circular or oval cones of rings of white stone ending in a sharp point, and coloured temple roofs. A lofty pagoda, surrounded by four lesser pagodas, and another with spear-pointed spires on the opposite side of the river, are the principal features of the scene, rising above a

group of white buildings of Italian renaissance style, and palatial schools, which have been built a long time but never opened. The whole scene is more Venetian than Venice itself. Higher up the river it again becomes a Chinese town, with black-painted front walls to the wooden houses, and red inscriptions ; and all teeming with life in quaint costumes and lively action, bare skins of many hues, tawny, mahogany, and others, and busy movement by land and water ; and even up in the blue sky innumerable toy kites, some of them fitted with musical-boxes, and live birds, crows and wheeling vultures. The land, which scarcely looks like solid land at all, but a phantasmagoria of moving colour, holds up plumes of green plaintain and the slender areca palm, 'an arrow shot from Heaven,' as a Hindoo poet calls it, and the river holds endless enjoyment for an artist ; fruit boats with two gondoliers and a gay parasol in the middle ; vegetable boats and all manner of shapes of caïque ; flower boats with pink flowering plants, and here, full of dwarf orange-trees, a gondola with the real gondola prow of burnished metal. The air is full of sounds of inusical bells and tom-toms, and the whole city is astir.

'Stand by your anchors.' We are arrived.

We are in time too for the pageant, which is grander than we anticipated. There are no less than four persons going to be cremated, two princes and two princesses.

'Oh ! they're lumping them,' says somebody, irreverently.

'Yes, the ceremonial is so frightfully expensive.'

A season of unusual sickness, though not epidemic, we hear, has carried off three of the king's seventy children. The deceased princess we first heard of was one of the king's numerous wives—not the queen, although a lady of royal birth. 'The custom of the Siamese from time immemorial has ascribed honour and glory to their princes and lords somewhat in proportion to the wives they have and can maintain.'* The affections must be diluted that are divided amongst so many. 'The last year has been marked by an unusual prevalence of illness, which, although not of an epidemic kind, has caused much suffering and loss of life,' says the king in his birthday speech, modelled on the New Year speeches of French and German potentates, in which he also alludes to the jubilee of his 'valued ally, the Queen of England and Empress of India.'

A palace is provided for us for the fortnight of our stay. 'What provisions shall we take on shore?'—They will supply us with wine and food.

'How hospitable!' says the Duke. 'Then we shall need nothing but shirt-collars;' pensively, 'I wonder what sort of a dinner they'll give us.'

The Duke's appetite is returning after his illness.

Dark Charlie's face of awed astonishment was as good as a play, when he saw his Grace pitch his physic into his wash-hand basin; so different from Sir Henry G., who always takes any medicine that is lying about, 'to prevent waste.'

We packed our things for shore, and rowed to the

* 'Bangkok Calendar.'

landing-place, among the picturesque and bewildering confusion of caiques, gondolas, and house-boats with flattened barrel-shaped bamboo covers to them, all filled with good-humoured people. 'If you run over the people, they don't mind; they smile at you; and so they do as we drive through the streets to our palace. I am glad the native coachmen are merciful. We drove through the city gates. Bangkok is surrounded by a crenellated wall twelve feet broad, with towers, round-headed battlements, and numerous gates. Turpin says the city was fortified, in 1685, by the Chevalier de Chaumont. This accounts for the semi-European look of the fortifications. Mrs. Leonowens says the wall dates from 1670. The palaces and royal harem are situated on the right hand as you ascend the stream, on a plot of ground formed by a sharp curve of the river, enclosing it on the west. The air was heavy with an odour as of incense, arising partly from the tropic vegetation of palms, plantains, &c., mingled with the small fires of vegetable refuse smouldering on the ground, which the natives use for their cookery.

A turn to the right brought us to the straight road which leads past the large enclosure containing the palaces and temples devoted to the king's use, a collection of varied and picturesque buildings, whose gilt and horned roofs, and pinnacles, and pagodas form a striking group; past the Premane, or ground enclosed for the cremation ceremonies, and out beyond the city to a long distance in the highly-cultivated country. Sparrows are as numerous and

unconcerned as in London ; but besides these are exquisite blue and other finely-coloured birds, like one sees in ladies' hats or on ladies' muffs in London, flying about here as unnoticed as the sparrows ; the tailless Siamese cats even do not appear to molest them.

Opposite the central gate of the royal palace the road is lined with broad spaces of green turf, here divided by a side-street leading to the Italian palace, where we are to take up our abode. Sentries presented arms to us on entering the paved courtyard, adorned with statues and ornamental plants in boxes, beyond which is the white palace front, where a steep marble staircase leads to a long vestibule, or rather saloon, on the first-floor, of fine size and proportion, floored with grey, polished marble, and divided by a range of columns from the outer corridors and balcony terraces. The lofty walls, distempered in cool grey-blue, are upholstered in blue satin damask, and the palace is furnished palatially throughout in the showy taste of southern Germany. I see the far-east is the market for the indifferent pictures in German-gilt frames, chiefly tea-board landscapes, painted so abundantly in Europe. I knew that British lodging-houses and foreign hotels could not absorb them all ; I see the rest come to Siamese palaces.

The chamberlain—his name was Bamrcubhakdi, his title Phaya, meaning duke or governor of a province—a fine man wearing a long white jacket, with gold buttons, a purple silk panung, a sort of breeches common to men and women in Siam, white silk

stockings, and buckled shoes, welcomed us to Saran-room, or the Palace of Calm Delights, and introduced us to our apartments, where, owing to the Chinese New Year, and the dilatory habits of the country, the workmen were still at work at the fastenings of the doors and shutters. There are no glass windows, except where, at each end of the long marble vestibule, the walls of plate-glass show a small drawing-room at either end.

Our rooms have coloured mosquito-curtains woven with gold thread, painted silk blinds, and painted and brocaded coverlets; no sheets, but a linen-covered mattress, and the softest of blankets folded up in case of need, and a hard round bolster laid down the middle of the bed.

A younger and smaller man in similar costume to our chamberlain is a member of the royal family appointed to look after us and act as interpreter. He speaks English perfectly, as he has studied medicine for several years in Edinburgh, and been altogether eleven years in Europe, principally in England. We call him Prince Doctor, as an easier name than Mom Rajawongse Yai Suaphan Sanitwongse, though not so pretty. He is partner with the Scotch Dr. Gowan in Bangkok, and has medical charge of the royal palace.

The toilet arrangements are most complete. As a graceful attention we are supplied with all kinds of perfumes—even the washing water is scented, alas!—tooth-powder, tooth-paste, liquid dentrifice, and every sort of brush, nail-brush, feather whisks, clothes-brushes, boot-brushes! and tooth-brushes!!

every requisite for the toilet, in short, but soap, and Pears' soap has been since supplied. Bertha flung the hair-brushes indignantly into a drawer. 'Do these *messieurs* fancy we do not carry about our brushes with us!'

The Duke has on his dressing-table hair-wash, face-wash, powder-puff, complexion paste, tablets for softening the hands, and everything that a Duke can desire, and this ungrateful nobleman cares for none of these things, their sweetness is wasted upon him. The pianoforte is more to his mind.

The palace attendants duck and run past the persons they mean to pay respect to if they are on an errand, otherwise they stop and squat upon the ground. The Chinese upper servants belonging to the victualling department here in the palace are dressed in white; the inferior servants are in drabs and blues. One or two of the half-dozen Chinamen who wait at table understand English. The Siamese upper servants have white jackets, or else shirts, and dark panungs; the lower ones wear dark jackets, and have a cigarette stuck behind the ear. They duck and run before the men in white jackets. These underlings wash the marble floors each day—the floors throughout the palace, that is, except in the bed-rooms, where there are rugs, carpets, and oilcloth. There is little or no dust in the palace; though hot, the climate is too moist to be dusty. The servants crouch on hands and knees to the chamberlain, and when they see us in the vestibule they duck and run and slink behind the columns as if afraid we should see them.

The first floor of this palace, where we are lodged, is built round an inner courtyard with a white pagoda-shaped structure in the middle, reflecting heat and a dazzling glare that is only endurable through the painted silk curtains of the corridors leading to our rooms; though when the sun is off this pleasant conjunction of verandah, corridor, and garden it forms an agreeable general meeting-place for talk, and for repose among the rows of crotons and foliaged plants, where the tame sparrows and other birds also enjoy life. There are swallows in abundance, likewise swifts, and occasionally crows fly about the courtyards. The crows and vultures are sacred, being the public scavengers. Siam offers a vast field to the ornithologist, and indeed to the naturalist in all lines. Mr. Michell is making a collection of coloured drawings of the birds; even he, an ornithologist, knew but few of them before. The consoles and balustrades of the cross corridors, and the staircases leading to the offices below, profusely covered with finely-coloured tropical shrubs, make a delightful natural aviary.

Coffee ices were brought to us in the long vestibule saloon while we read our letters from home. If the mails meet each other everywhere, letters can reach Bangkok from London in a month, but the Siamese foreign post is not a fixed and regular service. Tea and iced cake were next handed round. We thought this would be a pleasant place to stay in for a fortnight, and we agreed that King Chulalonkorn was an excellent host.

We read in the *Bangkok Times* that 'arrangements

for the cremation of the royal princess, also two sons and a daughter of His Majesty the King, whose loss we had to mourn last year, are now complete. The workmen have been busy for some five months in erecting the premane, and at last a fair idea may be had of the beautiful effect produced by the quaint architecture of the whole. There are about twelve large châlets erected on the ground around the premane, all more or less built of timber, with gables and upper storey in the style of early English and Italian architecture, with gardens transformed into rivulets and waterfalls (!) A very large house with canopies, pinnacles, etc., in endless variety, along with crockets, tracery, and other enrichments in the form of a Turkish grotto, is on the eastern side of the premane, the archways leading out to a broad verandah. 'In addition to these there are other beautiful cottages or stalls, handsomely painted and decked with flowers, whilst most of the articles to be given away are very valuable, of choice quality, and have all been purchased in Europe through Mr Muller.' It was difficult, in this muddle of Turkish grottoes, beautiful cottages, and early English and Italian châlets, waterfalls, etc., to gather anything clear of what there was to be seen, so Mr Cobham asked me to take an exploratory walk with him in the cool of the afternoon. The chamberlain, in full fig, offered to personally conduct us out to see the preliminary ceremonial, but we preferred, in gaining a first impression, to prowl about *incog.*

We watched some tilting of a peaceful sort with ponies on the green between our palace and the

royal precinct, whose high white wall conceals all but the white or golden pagoda spires of a delightfully bizarre group of buildings, and then we walked on through the crowded road round the place prepared for the cremation ceremony, the Premane itself. The whole scene gay and busy as a fair on a very large scale; the enclosure marked by lines of pagoda-shaped standards, of quaintest sort, to be used in the illuminations and scaffoldings covered with lamps in strange devices, and beyond the enclosure a series of open theatres, tea-shops answering to French cafés, illuminated shows and many places of amusement, all thronged by crowds in motley costume, the skins of women and children coloured with powdered Indian saffron; and camp fires showing us the preparation of multitudes to bivouac in the neighbourhood.

The naturally polite and good-humoured crowd eyed our costumes curiously, of course, just as we stared at them, but they did not press on us, nor stare rudely, though we challenged public interest along with the rest of the show. A better-mannered mob I never expect to see; everywhere, as they politely made way for us to pass, I thought of the Siamese proverb I had heard of, 'Nobility implies but pedigree, but manners the man.' Yet they were anxious to get all the fun of the fair too; there is a touch of human nature all over the world. We stood by the palace gates, at the western side of the enclosure, and saw a procession defile out with litters, urns, bands and banners.

It was the most theatrical thing, reminding us of

'Lohengrin,' or something still more spectacular by Augustus Druriolanus. Four curtained litters passed by with gorgeous ladies, wives of the king, the third litter containing the queen herself wearing black sewn with seed pearl, and a child with her in black; the fourth litter held a lady gay in pink and green and jewels. It is, I hear, a very unusual thing for the ladies of the royal harem to pass in open procession, but there they were, and of three of them at least we could see the unveiled faces distinctly. Banners swept on of many shapes and many tatters (from the wars?) most of them made of painted cotton; effective at a distance, but from our coign of vantage we saw them too near,—we were behind the scenes, as it were. One car bore golden images of Buddha under glass shades, then followed four biers, very richly decorated, that we supposed supported the bodies of the royal dead, with priests in yellow garments kneeling at the head and foot of each. We were afterwards informed that these were urns containing the ashes of former kings of the dynasty. The *Bangkok Times* of the 15th of February, 1888, said, 'Yesterday, the 14th instant, the urns containing the remains of former kings of the present dynasty were brought in procession from the Palace to the Premane, and then placed on the magnificent thrones prepared to receive them.' Tomtoms were played and conches most discordant, and other instruments of a Siamese band that we did not think much of. Then came the army in various shabby imitations of French uniform, and the navy represented by the men of the royal

yacht *Vesatri*; then followed a body of men in white who seemed to be palace officials, possibly cooks, with pointed white helmets or rather caps with brass rings hung round them.

After the long procession had filed out, Mr. Cobham and I walked on round the other side of the Premane precincts, still like a fair, and profuse in coloured decorations and black bunting. Many of the large buildings and warehouses have black, or black and white, decorations festooned upon them for mourning. The tall gates on this side were as profusely decorated as those in front, although they led out upon the back premises, and were neighboured by cooking and refreshment booths, and tents for the horses and other animals.

The fire-brigade was here stationed with several engines and paraphernalia seemingly in good working order; its presence appeared highly necessary in the midst of that profusion of canvas, painted paper, illuminations, and other theatrical properties. While we were examining the brigade—and they us—we noticed a large column of smoke rising at some distance; we suspected it was a fire, but as the brigade took no manner of notice of it, and the engines did not offer to stir, we concluded the smoke must relate to the ceremony in some way. Another Asian mystery.

The tall standards, looking like scaffolding arranged for illumination, were lighted up as we returned at dusk, losing our way, and feeling like babes in the wood in the bewildering throng, because we did not know the name of our palace,

and therefore could not ask for it. We found the turnip root last, it was not far to seek, and as a measure of precaution learnt the pronunciation of the palace's name, 'Saranroum' (the *n* is not sounded, and may be omitted), signifying place of delight, or of special rest. It was built about twenty-five years ago, as a place of repose for the king from the noise and bustle of his palaces in the royal enclosure. Possibly he is at times glad to get away from the clamour of his forty wives and seventy children. The large white stone barracks next to this palace were built six years ago. The column of smoke during this time had grown larger and loftier, and the sky on one side was black with its clouds, of which only here and there anyone took any notice or set off to run in the direction of the smoke. Truly there is a great calmness about these Orientals.

On our return we heard that the reason of this dense smoke was a great fire at a timber wharf and a ship-building yard. It might easily have burnt all Bangkok, which, as it is built of wood and grass, would have made a great cremation spectacle; but that is a detail. We asked why the fire brigade did not stir; they told us there was another brigade on the other side of the river, where the fire was. This does not seem to have been exact, but it might have been difficult to carry the engines, &c., across the river. The Father of all Knowledge, the *Bangkok Times*, soon gave us an account of it. I give the shorn heads thereof.

'A more destructive and rapid fire has seldom

been known in Bangkok. At the moment of the outbreak, about six p.m., all the inmates of the house were away, excepting the cook employed in the house where the fire originated, and who appears to have taken a tin of petroleum, and so set fire to the building. The alarm was quickly given, and, half-an-hour afterwards, some firemen and police arrived, and commenced to play upon the flames with hand-squirts, when great streams of fire burst forth from adjacent buildings; and it was evident that the conflagration would soon test the whole police force. Every narrow lane where there was a prospect of reaching the blaze was soon filled with men passing buckets of water along; but, in spite of all efforts, the flames steadily gained ground till they reached A. Kon Hoi's saw-mill, containing upwards of one hundred thousand dollars' worth of planks, which were quickly consumed. The flames then, by a slight-change in the direction of the wind, were driven across a small creek on to the backs of other houses to the east, several of which were gutted; the complete destruction of them, however, being averted by pulling down the attap roofs of four large buildings in their neighbourhood. From A. Kon Hoi's establishment the fire rapidly spread, and, after consuming another fifty houses or so, set fire to a second, but smaller, timber-yard. Here the conflagration reached its height, and the scene was one of awful grandeur. Dense clouds of black smoke and huge columns of bright flame rose to a level with the neighbouring Wat Chang' [the loftiest temple in Bangkok, covered

with glistening ornamentation of porcelain and earthenware. When a high tree caught fire it presented a magnificent appearance, but the sight did not last long; for the tree soon fell bodily into the burning abyss below. Towards a quarter-past seven, the fire reached a broad rivulet running along the whole side of the burning mass: and there the fire was kept in check by men standing up to their waists in the water, and throwing it on the flames. It is hardly possible to estimate accurately the amount of damage caused. Having regard, however, to the large amount of valuable timber consumed, and to the total loss of three hundred houses, with their contents, the loss may be stated, on the lowest calculation, to be over one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. At half-past seven all further danger was over; and then it was that the steam engine from the water-police station slowly steamed up, and calmly contemplated the smouldering remains.

The Duke of Sutherland, an accomplished amateur fireman, who in all his travels makes the fire brigades an object of attention, contrasted this sluggishness or unreadiness of the Siamese with what he had seen in New York, where the highly-trained horses placed themselves in position by the engine-pole, and the men dropped down the shoot, half-dressed, carrying their clothes to put on. They were ready in a minute exactly. 'See what we can do,' said Captain Shaw, on hearing this on the Duke's return to London. Captain Shaw signalled as for a fire, and out galloped the engine complete in twenty-three seconds.

From the windows of my own room I have a view of the towers and pagodas of the temples and palaces in the royal enclosure, with a clock in a tall tower which keeps time. Bangkok time is earlier than Greenwich by six hours forty-two minutes and one-and-a-half seconds. I can see several of the palace buildings and wats (temples), and a pleasing foreground of mangoes, plantains hung with fruit, and a large forest tree most freshly green, the haunt of delightful birds; also the children and fine poultry belonging to my dusky neighbour, in the small street by the side of our palace. At noon I shut the shutters, to keep out the heat, and sit to write in a small inner room beyond the great marble vestibule, which I have adopted as my afternoon sitting-room. It is pleasant writing by the open windows looking out on a grove with pagodas peeping up among the trees, and pink amaryllis flowers growing in vases on the parapets of the verandah. We have a large drawing-room with a piano in it, and other sitting-rooms, corridors, &c., on the opposite side of the central courtyard, and a smoking-room and a handsome drawing-room at one end of the long dining-room, where there is a table long enough to dine fifty persons.

They give us heavy luncheons and European dinners. For every meal the epergnes are newly dressed with fresh flowers, many of them new to me. As they see me look closely at these, the attendants try to take me in by fitting centres of hibiscus into calyxes of lilies, and other deceptions, sometimes so well done that Linnæus himself might

be delicious. They watch with amused looks to see if I shall be caught. They grow a beautiful blue flower here, a pure ultramarine (papilionaceous blossom) - the same plant, the *terea*, that I gathered at Massowah, only cultivated, double, and handsome. We should find this a great addition to our small stock of blue flowers.

The drinking water tastes muddy, and is full of vegetable matter. This, they said, was owing to the pipes having been recently laid. We punished their soda-water pretty well. They gave us condensed milk, thinking it was our custom to take it, and that we preferred it to fresh milk, which is, however, readily procured in Bangkok.

The royal gardens just outside our palace are very pleasant, full of flowers and stately trees. A long turf-y glade, shaded with masses of bamboo, whose columns creak and sigh with every swaying breeze, is lined with seats, and, I must admit, commonplace European statues; these seats command charming views of pagodas and wats, with horned gables to their coloured roofs. A collection of Siamese birds, curious pheasants, peacocks, &c., is kept behind the hedges of this glade, and a menagerie of wild beasts of Siam, leopards and others, and great grey adjutants strut about the gardens. There is a stand for the band, which plays here on Saturday afternoons, when the public are admitted. A long conservatory filled with ferns and orchids has winding staircases leading to an agreeable promenade on the roof. There is also a tennis-ground surrounded by seats, fountains, and curious figures of men,

lions, and dragons, cut in a small-leaved species of yew. The Siamese are fond of flowers, but I see they chiefly employ Chinese gardeners.

The king commanded that every day two of the royal carriages should be in waiting at our palace gates for our use whenever we wish to take a drive; but as it is sometimes said that everyone should travel on foot, like Thales, Plato, and Pythagoras, the actual examination of things giving life to the idea, I went about sometimes on foot, like the philosophers, to get a closer view of the streets of Bangkok than one commands from a carriage.

I see the Siamese have a taste for classical temples. Several small specimens of these are mingled with the Buddhist national temples, as well as fifth-rate statuary such as abounds in the precincts of the Palace of Calm Delights, Floras, Hebes, and most killingly French Cupids. The young Siamese nobles sent to Europe to study bring back a taste for these classical temples, and for artificial stone statuary purchased in the Euston Road.

I hurry past these ornaments, preferring the truly native localities, where, under light bridges, often made of a single pole or plank supported on tressels, boats are darting about the various canals, rowed chiefly by women wearing panungs, with a scarf over their shoulders, which is the chief difference between men's and women's costume, and hats like broad round baskets turned upside-down, and fitted inside with a wicker cap of open work. This strange but sensible hat has every advantage of shade and cool-

ness. They are made of palm-leaves neatly sewn together; some of them are very finely sewn and woven. The children mostly run about naked, or with nothing but metal or glass ornaments.

There are not many jinrickshas, and the few are very shabby, as if bought second-hand from Singapore; but a good many sorts of four-wheeled vehicles run on the macadamised road, bordered by the telegraph, which I followed as we do in France, where it generally leads to the centre of the town. The Siamese have pillar-post boxes, too. Why these should have surprised me, I do not know, as I had already used their postage-stamps. The people stare, of course, at seeing me out alone in British costume, but they are not rude nor aggressive, and there are no demands for baksheesh or largesse of any kind. There is no gas, but they have the electric light in some places, and plenty of oil gas; and petroleum lamps and Chinese lanterns light the streets sufficiently. The Duke has given the king one of the large new lucigen lights; there is to be a trial of it to-night, and, if successful, it will be used at the cremation.

The weather was extremely warm—unusually so, they tell us, for February, which is thus spoken of in the Bangkok calendar: ‘During February the wind blows much of the time from the N.E., at other times from the E. and S.S.E., and the weather is cool, pleasant, and healthy. Sometimes the wind veers to the south, and it becomes oppressive for a day or two. Showers of rain generally occur about the middle of the month, which are regarded as indis-

pensable to set the mango-fruit, then hanging thickly on the trees like small egg-plums." The best mangoes in the world are Siamese; the stones are a flattened ovoid.

Mr. Michell, legal adviser to the King of Siam, took his sister, Lady Clare, to present her to the king; but His Majesty, knowing that there were two ladies in the Duke's party, expressed to our chamberlain his regret that I had not accompanied them, and hoped I would attend his banquet at the palace on the following day, causing a particular invitation to be sent me, addressed and written in Siamese, and sealed with a golden seal.

We dressed in our gayest robes of state for the king's dinner-party, as we heard His Majesty liked the brightest of colours. The gentlemen mostly wore uniform or court dress. We were given chairs in the vestibule of the royal palace, while waiting for some formality or other. As no European ladies had ever dined with the king before, there was no precedent for our reception. The queen did not appear. We were taken upstairs to a large saloon, the roof supported by columns, and fancy portraits of former Siamese sovereigns, &c., hung all round. The room was European; indeed, the palace was Renaissance, or Italian cinquecento throughout. This palace, called Sapratoine, was built nearly twenty years ago. The only Oriental objects in the saloon were the king's ivory throne, a really beautiful piece of carving, and the costumes of the Siamese princes, chamberlains, and the attendants who ducked and ran behind the columns past the grandees, or the Europeans.

One other lady was present on this occasion, a Portuguese countess, the wife of the Governor of Macao, who was here with his son. Besides the Duke of Sutherland's party, there were several Europeans: Commodore de Richelieu, who commands the Siamese fleet; Captain Bush, R.N., an old friend and trusted counsellor of His Majesty; Mr. Michell, his legal adviser; Mr. Macarthy, who has been surveying the country with a view to railways; and Doctor Gowan, the chief royal physician, and Lieutenant Chaby, a Portuguese. Our chamberlain and Prince Doctor were also present, covered with orders and decorations.

After some time of waiting, when everyone was assembled, King Chulalonkorn appeared, wearing black for mourning, and received us in the fashion of western royalty. We curtsied deeply as he shook hands with us. He is a handsome man, slight and small, though taller than most of the members of his family, and much better-looking than any of them. His Majesty took the lead alone.

I was taken in first to dinner—in right of my age, I suppose, though we ladies were none of us juvenile—by the king's eldest full brother, who is his prime minister; the Prince Devawongse, brother of the queen, better known as Prince Devan (the king's private secretary and chancellor of the exchequer), who was called prime minister when he was here in England, seems, on account of his knowledge of English and his wide travelling experience, to be Minister of Foreign Affairs; but Prince Goodness-knows-how-to-spell-him-wongse spoke English equally

well, though he had never been in Europe. The Duke of Sutherland took in the Portuguese countess—alas! she did not even speak French—and Prince Devan took in Lady Clare.

The king's chair of state was placed at the centre of the long table; his relatives and nobles, mostly wearing costumes of cloth of gold and Kincaid brocades, quite a feast of colour, surrounded His Majesty. We three ladies sat facing the king, divided by the Duke of Sutherland and the Portuguese Governor. The guests numbered about sixty in all. The band in an ante-room played delightfully, national Siamese music alternately with selections from the 'Bohemian Girl' and 'Faust'; Valentine's song being especially well-played; the performance commencing and ending with the spirited Siamese national hymn.

The musicians are all native; their leader is a Siamese. The military band in the courtyard was led by an Italian band-master.

They do not use punkahs in Siam, but attendants in crimson costumes waved large feather-fans over our heads, jerking them suddenly so as to frighten off the mosquitoes. There are few or no flies in Bangkok.

The chief princes of the royal house wore beautiful jewelled collars of a native Order; Prince Premier had, of course, one of these. Some of the elderly nobles, in brocaded raiment, opposite, stared at us so hard through their spectacles that it was almost embarrassing. They did not exactly stare rudely, but as if spellbound with astonishment that women should be able to talk intelligently, sit at

table, and eat their dinner properly. The Siamese men and women do not take their meals together.

Dinner was served in European style, the glass and porcelain, all from Europe, were engraved and painted with the royal arms and King Chulalon-korn's long name, though perhaps not all his numerous names. The king and princes all drank European wines.

The dessert was the only thing presenting any great novelty to us ; the sweetmeats were curious, and the fruits various and strange. I was persuaded to try the jack-fruit, which is pleasant and good for food. The jack-fruit in its large, rough husk, weighs nearly seventy pounds. But it is another popular fallacy that tropical fruits are delicious ; they are not to be compared with ours. It is curious how the notion ever arose that the fruits were fine, of excellent quality, that is, in the tropics.

Prince Premier talked well ; he had heard about my books, and that I am taking notes to write my impressions of Siam. The Siamese, he thinks, would be more conservative than we, in the parliament which is with them an idea for the far distant future. Though quite a young man, he does not think he shall live to see the railway that will shorten the journey from Europe—or India—to Bangkok by crossing the head of the long Malayan peninsula. He does not want it evidently. The king laughed and talked with his princes, and frequently addressed us through an interpreter ; indeed, he was a very agreeable host to his various guests. How varied

can hardly be imagined, there is such a wide difference of ideas between us and the elder nobles in Kincohs ; the languages were perhaps our least difference: there were the Portuguese lady speaking no language but her own, the Governor of Macao addressing me in French, Siamese babbled softly in its liquid semi-Italian murmurs all round, and English chattered distinctly enough.

Mixed society indeed, but 'tis only in mixed society you find the true sparkle, the fire of clashing wits, the lightning flashes of adverse opinions,'—though these things are scarcely to be found at kings' tables. Anyway, we gather new impressions.

After dinner we were conducted to a smaller saloon, richly furnished in European style. Here the king handed garlands of flowers to many of us, which we hung round our necks or arms. Mine was a chain of alternate white and yellow night-scented flowers (yellow the royal colour). Some of the wreaths were pink, some white, all various and all perfumed. When I got home I hung up my wreath to preserve it. The scent was so strong that I could hardly bear it even with three open windows and a draught right through the room. I noticed the incense smell of odorous night-scented flowers all over Siam, in those 'still, heavy, oppressive, fragrant nights.'

Though the king conversed with us through an interpreter, he fully understood what we said; indeed, I always addressed myself to him directly. Prince Premier told me the king knew and spoke English as well as the best of them, but he has a

certain scruples in speaking lest he should make any mistakes. Some books say it is not etiquette for the king to speak in any but his own language, but this is not the case. Prince Premier, and indeed all the princes, spoke of the king with much affection, and a respect bordering on veneration. He seems a most amiable monarch.

We ladies and the Duke of Sutherland were taken to another part of the palace to be presented to the queen, a charming little woman dressed in black—she was in mourning for her children—wearing the panung (of black silk), which, like the men's costume, is arranged so as to have the appearance of knee-breeches, showing her legs in open-worked black silk stockings to the knee. She has very small and pretty feet and ankles. She wore the national form of scarf across her shoulders, and several orders on her black jacket, which was sewn with seed pearl. Her hair is cut short like a boy's, and she wears nothing on her head. It is a comical, yet piquant costume. The queen is not handsome in face, but dignified, and very pleasing in manner; I was captivated by her. Her Majesty does not understand English, so we spoke through an interpreter. She spoke gravely, I thought nervously, as if unaccustomed to such public speaking. She said she was gratified to receive a visitor of such distinction as the Duke of Sutherland. We backed out in proper form. What must she have thought of our voluminous trained skirts!

It was only 10 10 when we returned to the Palace of Calm Delights, but we had passed a pleasant

evening, notwithstanding that the thermometer stood at 35°.

Our poor dear 'Happy' has been lost from the yacht, as he swam ashore for the fourth time. By this time he will have been destroyed by the pariah dogs, or, worse still, made into pies by the Chinese.

CHAPTER V.

HIGH LIFE IN ASIA.

Is it illusion or not that attracteth the pilgrim transalpine,
 Brings him a dullard and dunce hither to pry and to stare ?
 Is it illusion or not that allures the barbarian stranger,
 Brings him with gold to the shrine, brings him in arms to the gate ?

A. H. CLOUGH.

My key to modern Siamese history, the *Bangkok Times*, says, 'On Friday the 17th of February, early in the morning, the remains of His Royal Highness Soindetch Chow Fa Siri Rachakukutbandh, and His Royal Highness Soindetch Chow Fa Bhakuratmnimai will be placed on the large funeral cars and brought in procession to the premane, where they will be placed in the central dome.'

We arrayed ourselves in white for complimentary mourning and because of the heat; but in rather dressy costume, as we were to meet several of the royal ladies, who were also invited to take seats in the verandah of Mr. Michell's house, opposite the royal grand stand erected under a striped awning near the principal gates of the palace. About half-a-dozen of the prince's wives sat with us in this gallery chatting, chewing betel, and carefully closing

the jealousies between them and the crowd below. We opened those at the other end of the verandah wide that we might see all that was to be seen.

Facing us, across the road, sat the queen and the king's wives in a closed gallery, though we could see their black dresses plainly, and sometimes their faces. A golden throne was placed in the centre of this pavilion for the king, but he did not occupy it. We were offered seats in the royal enclosure, but, as full dress for us and hot uniform for the gentlemen would have been indispensable, we declined them, having already accepted the offer of Mr. Michell's gallery overlooking the road. The space of turf made our seats a little further off, but it was a relief having the green to look out upon, and the ways of the crowd and their variegated costume were as entertaining to us as the procession itself.

Some of the officers of the yacht stood behind the Duke.

We waited and talked, and, seeing my note-book open, Prince Doctor came near to give me a correct explanation of everything, though there was too much to look at to allow much time for explanations. The gay and varied festival costumes of the crowd looked like a 'wind-stirred tulip-bed,' in particular the bright colours of umbrellas and panungs. European hats, straw or billycock, are very general, but inharmonious with the national costume. These hats look like German make. Penny ices served like we see them in London on a Sunday are popular among the crowd. The inevitable 'Derby dog' is represented by a squalling baby, in a scarlet

paoung, with anklets and such a funny little pigtail, continually licking the grass-green inexpressibles of his patient papa.

Thronggs are arriving from all quarters; now it is impossible to cross the road. Prince Doctor told me of a Siamese gentleman walking in London, who asked, after vainly trying to cross the Strand, if there was a cremation going on?

They are forming for the processions; men in lapis-lazuli blue jerkins with orange and red flags, and other blue uniforms, alternating with the sailor dress of the numerous royal yachtsmen lining the road, and a discordant band. Here is an elephant, a white elephant—no, a model. The Augustus Drurio-lanus of Bangkok shines to-day. Red coats and red hats (men implied) bear green and yellow standards of muslin or paper. Then come various standards, crosses, and a sort of may-pole; then pagoda-shaped standards of three graduated umbrellas, and pagoda-shaped lanterns.

All stood still till the royal procession appeared. The king led the way, wearing Siamese costume and a black billycock hat. He was carried by men in a throne under a state umbrella. Two of his children in white were with him, one stood by him, the smaller one sat on his knee. The crown prince was carried on a similar throne behind him.

packets of yellow and red cloth, for presents to the priests, are borne on small canopied arks. The arks are really borne on poles, though they are apparently drawn by men in red. A symbolical figure, a 'dragon-endedman,' as Prince



Doctor described him, with a fiery ball, was carried under a red umbrella.

‘Do you see that figure-head, Butters?’ says the Duke.

The first mate grins at it, and at the gold cocks, green and red dragons, and other fabulous animals. It is strange how demon-worship lingers among these people, notwithstanding the reformations effected by Sivartha (Buddha).

‘That is a god who eats snakes,’ says my clever one. ‘That is one who eats ladies.’

‘A useful beast,’ ventured somebody, his name does not matter, as he was instantly annihilated. Then come a number of round standards, and some banners crossed ‘baldric-wise’ with white ribbons.

‘This is a god who goes about looking after the big snake Pianah and devours it. He is the bearer of the sun. This is a symbol of the sun drying up the swamps.’

Now comes the band. This national music is a whirring sound accompanying the pipes. The whirring is perhaps more agreeable than the drone of the Scotch bagpipes. The screeching baby contributed its assistance to the band. He was pacified with an ice. He has been smiting his mother too hard, so again the green-breasted father takes and fondles him tenderly. Children are ruled by love in Siam—where the birch does not grow.

‘Oh, my eye, here is a go, forty ‘buses in a row!’ quoted Prince Doctor, who, as we know, studied the classics in England, as more dragons, heraldic lions rampant, and other symbolical figures on cars

came to a halt before the royal gallery—and ours.

A light breeze makes sight-seeing endurable, but the thermometer stands at 90° in the shade. The Chinamen selling the penny ices drive a fine business. Sir Andrew Clarke comes up to our gallery. He found himself—in his light dust-coat—among all the gaily-dressed Siamese nobles in golden kincobs; and, when his name was called out, he had to apologise for his costume, as he passed before the king. He finds life easier on our side. The dragons and armies move on again, with heavily-broidered banners. Then come the men in white, with the pointed hats with metal rings round them, bearing crimson artificial flowers in triple bunches, arranged pagoda-wise. There are about a hundred of these flower-bearers.

Bursts of sound of drums are heard, and pipes and fifes; drummers in scarlet appear, banging their drums at intervals, to mark the discordant music, heralding a black-satin parasol surrounded by drum-shaped standards arranged in tiers, pagoda-wise. This pagoda arrangement of everything has a mystical meaning. Standards of all sorts are arranged in this way, graduating in size, in certain symbolic numbers, three, seven, or nine. These standards are on the coinage and on the royal seal. The royal crown, and that of the crown prince, are formed on the same plan. The ornaments are all said to be symbolical: the five pagodas of the Wat in the cremation-ground are so, viz., of the four cremated princes and the king.

Surrounded by these standards is borne a lofty

golden car, with a priest sitting in it under an umbrella. This priest is the king's brother; he is a priest for life. All the Siamese men above a certain grade have to enter the priesthood at some time of their lives, and may remain in it as long as they please. The king himself was a priest for a year before he came to the throne.

Another dignitary, a child, is carried past us on a chair, and another, followed by men in red drawing the state catafalques, with the bodies of the princes, the deceased Chow Fa and his brother; the two funeral cars connected by a long silver ribbon, or breadth of silver tissue very costly. Those are followed by more pagoda-standards and men in white, with red flowers, and a lesser car with urns containing the ashes of former cremated kings and princes of the dynasty. The approach of three other cars, bearing white figures with banners, preludes a movement onwards on the part of the populace, who accompany the bearers of innumerable arks containing presents to the priests. There are hundreds of these. The living figures clothed in white on the cars represent angels; they are all, and must be, men of the royal family, grandsons of a king. Behind these cars are borne very tall pagoda-standards, like may-poles, closing the procession. A native Siamese on a tricycle, swallowing the dust, brings up the rear.

These two bodies which have been borne in procession to-day will be cremated together on Monday next; the bodies of the two princesses will be burnt a week later. The whole ceremonial is to occupy a fortnight.

It is now eleven a.m., and the queen, dressed all in black, has left the royal gallery; the royal ladies in black and white, with black satin parasols, are moving away too; and the king's golden chair is taken away.

The impression left by this display on the thoughtless or uninstructed mind is a mixture of the theatre and the motley muddle of a fancy ball. The Duke quotes the famous Scotchman in *Punch*, who says, 'I don't care much for dancing, nor much for dinners, but for real enjoyment give me a thorough good funeral.'

The spirited royal ponies, chiefly piebald, are being led back. The royal ladies in our gallery depart, trying all they can to get away unnoticed. The gentlemen were very careful not to go too near them, but I sat by them talking. They showed their goodwill, and their betel-blackened teeth, in smiles and signs; but conversation languished, and I returned to chat and eat ices with our own party and Mr. Michell's friends, pleasant English people living in Bangkok. Mr. Michell showed us his drawings of the native birds, and two specimens of the Siamese fighting fish that he keeps separate; as, when he sets the glasses containing them together, they at once set up their backs and change colour.

Several of the princes and courtiers stayed with us until they should be called for duty at the king's palace. These officials get a habit of waiting about, loafing in a graceful or dancing-master-like manner. While they are here, and while green coco-nuts are

being peeled, and their tops struck off for us to taste the fresh coco-nut milk, we get all the information we can obtain from persons able to read the native Siamese papers. We hear we cannot, in any case, leave Bangkok before the spring-tide of the 27th of February. It will be hot weather by then, as March is their hottest month. Though, as regards the difference of seasons in Siam, I should say that, while winter is the 'frying-pan,' summer is the 'fire.' Yet for all the sun's glare, there are few blind people to be seen in these crowds. Being a moist climate, there is less dust than in many southern places.

We feel like people who have been to a wedding, with the day left on their hands. After eating a few banana ices and tasting some sala,—a horny fruit, a cross between an armadillo, a lobster, and a Brazil nut, too strong in flavour to be palateable,—we are eager to go curio-hunting, but we hear there are no manufactories here, not even of pottery; they send their orders to China for nearly everything, so the old enamelled terra-cotta ware, with floral decorations, or figures of Buddha and lotus-leaves, is now only to be found in museums. This is a pity, as this pottery was not quite like Persian nor Chinese; it was just Siamese. There are likewise no native silks: but if idle, the people are respectable, for Prince Doctor tells us there are no Siamese thieves in Bangkok. True, as there are no manufactures, there is the less temptation to steal.

The modern flat coinage was issued in Siam in 1862. A tical is the size of a florin, nominal value

half-a-crown ; five silver ticals are given for three dollars. The old Siamese coinage of ticals, two and four tical pieces, and half, quarter, and one eighth of a tical, a sort of rolled-up balls of silver with a stamp thereon, have become rare, and are therefore sought eagerly at high prices ; the larger balls are mostly used as buttons to the white linen jackets worn by gentlemen in the tropics. The modern coinage is sent minted from London. The silver is, by order from Siam, more heavily alloyed than ours, therefore its value is depreciated when carried out of the country. They still work a little in silver, making kettles, bowls, and tazzas, or stands for bowls in silver *repoussé*, the outside engraved with flowers, gilt or gold lacquered by a peculiar Siamese process, the spaces nielloed or filled in with antimony.

When the tidal canals are dry, it is less agreeable driving in Bangkok ; so at flow of tide in the comparative cool of the afternoon I took a drive with young Mr. Swinn, the son of our chamberlain, an intelligent youth of eighteen, who has been educated in England, and who rubbed up his English considerably during our stay in Bangkok. He says there are nearly forty Siamese schoolboys in London. There were eleven in the school he was at on Hampstead Heath. It seems a grievous pity after the young Siamese have been educated in England to plunge them back into the semi-barbarism of the native habits, and let them experience all the evils of polygamy. Young Swinn does not smoke, nor does he chew betel, he loathes it ; so does his father,

but he is obliged by his position at Court to conform to the customs of the country. Our chamberlain and his son are tall, large men,—for Siamese, that is, who are mostly small and delicately made. The gentlemen of our party—it is true they are none of them under six feet high—look like a race of giants among them.

We drove through the fields of rice and sugarcanes, haunted by flocks of small black and white birds, by a good level road between hedges during part of the way, to a place, called Sabratummawani, a little beyond a castellated building called the Crown Prince's palace. While the horses rested unharnessed we tried to get into a neighbouring wat (temple), crossing a broad ditch, almost a canal, by means of a log of wood. Landing-steps leading up from the ditch to the lych-gate show that worshippers generally come up by boat to this wat through the marshes of paddy and tapioca.

Mr. Swinn says they have a day answering to our Sunday three times a month.

The temple gates are shut, but at last we find an entrance, on making a circuit by way of the houses of the temple attendants.

The temple is in a dilapidated state—nothing is ever repaired in Siam, as the house falls so it must lie—but in point of decoration it was the most really artistic of any temple I saw in Siam. The green and blue mosaics inlaid in the cement were good; some gilt lotus-leaves with looking-glass ribs were curious and clever; a small bird on a lotus-leaf, naturalistic and very pretty, went so far as to

remind me of some rough-and-ready efforts of the early Italian artists ; the best bits even, dare I say it, of the outer border decoration of the Ghiberti gates of San Giovanni at Florence. Outside the wat are curious figures of mythological animals, dragons, smiling antelopes, and men apparently in transports of fury. Round the doors is inlaid a green glass mosaic work of lotus-plants with fish in the water and birds among the lotuses branching up. As in Japan, 'the lotus-flowers are an emblem of purity, righteousness, and immortality.' This mosaic I can hardly fancy to have been the work of Siamese artists, but young Mr. Swinn did not know, he believed it was. He was rather astonished at my admiration of it. The decoration with small pieces of looking-glass is sometimes seen in Burmese work, but all I have seen has been barbaric compared with this.

We climbed into the dàgoba, as it is called in Ceylon and Burmah, the word is not used here ; in Siam these stone buildings, a pagoda-shaped mixture of forms, round, square, and spiral, are called Buddha's tomb. This building always accompanies a wat, the temple itself, which is generally built of wood profusely coloured and inlaid. Within the precincts of the dàgoba is always a bo-tree, *Ficus religiosa*, the tree sacred to Buddha, beneath which he sought and found Nirvana.

Earthenware balustrades enamelled blue line the very steep steps leading up to the Buddha's tomb, and doors six inches thick guard the internally small temple, where there is a model of Buddha's foot, engraved as usual with symbols on the sole,

and an inner sanctuary where there is Buddha's reclining figure in fine white marble, very highly finished and polished like the antique statues. I have seen Burmese images of this kind of white marble, but this figure was not like the work of a Burmese artist. In vain did I try to discover the origin of this statue, or whence the marble came. Mr. Swinn said 'it was found in the country here'; but did he know it for certain? No one could I find who considered this ruinous country temple worthy of a thought. I tried to persuade Mr. Cobham, who appreciates art, to visit this temple and give me his opinion of it; but there was so much else to be seen, and the weather was so hot, that expeditions were not to be lightly undertaken. Of course I could not find a photograph of it. From the steps of the dagoba we had a good view of the mosaic figures in the coloured pediment, an equilateral triangle, of the wat. These figures are merely archaic. Near here is a large metal bell that they ring for worship.

The pepper-plant, *Piper Betle*, whose leaves prepared with lime they eat with the betel-nut, grew in profusion outside the wat. I gathered a wild straw-coloured lily and several plants new to me, as we repassed the 'monkey bridge' on our return to the carriage at sunset. We returned by the bank of one of the numerous canals, now full of water and boats, bordered by the numerous lights of bamboo dwellings half-hidden among the foliage, and the lamps of small pagodas glimmering behind the plantains and feathery bamboos, and home by the lantern-lighted shops of the Chinese quarter,

where the people were preparing their supper, intermingled with the flaring and more lurid lights of those strange pandemonia, the Chinese gambling-houses.

After dinner, which was usually at half-past seven, the carriages were brought round again to take us to the Premane, where the king was expecting us to visit him.

The scene was like the Colonial Exhibition gone mad; outside the Premane enclosure, the wild and brilliant illuminations, the contorted tumbling and strange acting in the shows, and the strong lights and shadows on the bewilderingly varied population, made the maddest, merriest of entertainments; a transformation-scene at a pantomime is a composition, a masked ball is held in coherence by the musical rhythm, this was like a multiplication of these sights, fifty country fairs all whirling together, held in no order save that of universal good behaviour and good humour. I neither saw nor heard of a single case of quarrelling or drunkenness during the fourteen days and nights that the festivity lasted. Naturally we could not drive past the *chevaux-de-frise* barring the road for the protection of the multitude, but our excellent chamberlain, all in white for mourning, marshalled us through the crowds to the comparatively quiet enclosure of the Premane, to which to-night none but the king's family and guests were admitted. Here we sat in full evening dress in the charming gardens illuminated by lanterns with elephants painted on them, and innumerable devices for effects

of light and colour. The Siamese seem particularly clever at these displays. There was something to arrest and stimulate the attention everywhere, the whole scene was a strange mixture of civilization and—no, not savagery, as some one carelessly observed—nativity. The châlets were filled with flowers, or birds, or softly whirring bands of Siamese music, and the fanciful kiosks with every contrivance for repose, refreshment, and conversation; the winding paths were bordered by tall Chinese vases holding crotons and other tropical plants, alternately with lesser but elegant pots filled with choice flowers. An Oriental evening fête at an Oriental botanic garden, a fête within a fête. On a broad space of turf the lucigen light was ready to be lighted; the Duke's engineers and several officers of the yacht were ready in attendance, and Aleck the piper, in full Highland dress, was to walk up and down playing the pipes before the king. After tea had been handed round, we, the Duke's party, were conducted up to the head of a staircase on to a sort of balcony where the king, in black, with all his brothers in black, received us, Aleck piping below the while. After shaking hands all round, the king presented us ladies each with a fan painted with a view of the Premane and the names of the four royal dead who were to be cremated. He gave the Duke as a souvenir a valuable tea-service of the rare native Siamese ware, enamelled on metal, on a round silver tray.

Then the king selected from a bowl of silver sprays, tied with white ribbon, like bridal favours, a spray for each of us, which he gracefully presented.

On each spray were three waxen balls, like coloured fruits (blue and purple), containing each a sort of lottery ticket, giving us three presents a-piece. The whole reception was delightfully singular, fanciful, and pretty. Though, like most Orientals, the king has great sense of personal dignity, perhaps his grace and good manners are his greatest distinction ; they are so simple, besides, and so natural.

Yet Feridun was not an angel, nor
Composed of musk and ambergris. By justice
And enlightenment he gained his fame.*

Then he presented to us the crown prince, aged nine, and two others of his children, whom he called through the curtained window of his private apartments. These bright, lively children were all very prettily mannered, and shook hands and spoke in English. They wore round their top-knots of hair above the forehead little chaplets of the small, white mali-flower. The youngest boy—a darling of five years old—the king told us, was learning English. He replied to our 'How do you do?' 'Tite well, I tant you.' We were charmed with the child. I asked him how old he was, but the dear little pet was at a loss to answer. Kissing is not understood in Siam, so Mr. Michell told us, when we would have kissed the dear little prince who spoke so prettily. Could it be taught by a competent professor? On retiring, after some talk with the king, and looking at the charming view of the illuminated grounds from above—the lucigen light extinguished by this time—we were taken by some of the princes

to look round the whole of the buildings in the cremation ground, all made of paper and bamboo, even where it looked like Italian palaces of white marble. Prince Premier told me it was all to be removed, or destroyed, after the cremation ceremony. The bewildering idea to us was the purpose of the whole thing—that this scene of pleasure was the cremation-ground.

Then we were taken up another staircase to the kind of bazaar where they keep the presents which, according to Siamese custom, the king distributes to his guests and nobles on such occasions. The fruit-balls were here plucked off our silver sprays, opened, and presents found to match the numbers. I received a very curious golden purse for Siamese sovereigns, a set of gold studs reddened by special native process with cinnabar (sulphide of mercury), and a silver-gilt tea-kettle embossed with raised figures in gold. This is a sign of nobility, like the silver tea-pot embossed with gold that Sir J. Bowring describes, 'that nobody might use unless he were a noble.' I felt like a countess at least.

After duly admiring the French clocks, vases, and bijouterie collected as presents to the native multitude, we were taken across the plaited bamboo-walk leading to the steps of the gilt and pasteboard temple, to see the splendid shrines containing the corpses of the princes, all of gold enriched with diamonds, placed on a resplendent golden altar blazing with light and dazzling with gems. Eight kneeling figures in eastern armour support tall pagoda-standards at the foot of the altar-steps, which

rise in a pyramid of lamps and offerings of flowers in golden vases. The long silver ribbon borne between the coffins in the procession passes up the centre of the steps, between the shrines, to the altar, and the remainder lies folded in a pile on an elaborately-wrought stand between the kneeling standard-bearers. The whole chancel is hung with rich and strange tissues, draperies and pictures, and the outer walls with gorgeous eastern carpets of great size, woven in silk and gold. A full description of the decorations and upholstery would require a volume to itself to explain the forms, arrangements, and the meanings thereof. The whole magnificence is laden with mystery, 'hints haunt us ever of a more beyond,' and the air is laden with the heavy night-scented temple-flowers (*plumeria acutifolia*) and incense of the ceremonies and of the heated earth.

From this *chapelle ardente* we walked through the ranks of prostrate worshippers and between the bodies of sleeping attendants of the priests to our carriages, which we never should have found without our chamberlain and others, and drove home, to vainly try to sleep and rest. We can get so very little sleep here in Bangkok for the noises of the night—trumpets and the ringing of multitudinous pagoda-bells proclaim the last hour of day, midnight, and from that time cannons are booming, guns popping, bells and cymbals clashing, tom-toms drumming, owls, cats, and brats crying, and excited people gambling nearly all night. One's rooms are wide open to the air, and the cock-crowing and the constant passing of bands

of national or military music make one foreswear all love of serenades from this time forth.

'The time is good, the habit p'raps romantic,
But tending, if pursued, to drive the neighbours frantic.'

Ten o'clock was the time fixed for our visit to the temples in the royal enclosure and the famous white elephants. We were already tired, and if we could have got out of seeing these sights we would gladly, but for very shame, have done so. The thought of 'What will they say in England, where they don't feel the heat?' goaded us on, and at length we summoned up resolution, and went, sallying forth in a body for mutual moral support to the palace grounds. It was extremely hot, I may have remarked this before; it was so true as to become a truism. We took refuge in a large painted cloister, but as the queen was then at her devotions in an adjoining chapel, we were taken first to see the celebrated white elephants, and saw five so-called white elephants. Albino is what is meant, but we have translated it as white. The pink eye is the true distinction of a white elephant. The animals stood, each in a separate building, on a platform under a red canopy. Their forelegs are hobbled, they are fastened also by the hind-leg to a gilt and painted column, very strong. They are fed on small bundles of grass, and bananas are given as a relish. We fed them with plenty of both sorts of food. It is an unhappy life for the poor beasts, who never move except when led out for a walk in the morning. They are not white, nor even very pale excepting about the ears. One aged creature had his tusks

so long that they were twisted over each other and almost rested on the ground. One very large ancient elephant, the whitest of the lot, perhaps white with age, they gave us to understand it was over ninety years old, actually mouldy with age and ghastly with decrepitude, had to be supported by girths of rope to keep it from falling. It could never have raised itself had it once fallen, and all the king's horses and all the king's men could not have set it up again. The Buddhist religion forbids their putting a bullet through it and ending this long-suffering existence. I have seen in a home newspaper a paragraph to the effect that we were permitted to visit the white elephants which one of the party describes as 'mangy frauds.' I did not hear this remark made, nor do any of us own to it. But it does not indicate powerful imagination on the part of the writer of the paragraph.

Oh, the broiling heat of the noon-tide sun on those flagstones! and oh, the indomitable British energy in sight-seeing that endures it! How we crept along by the narrow shadows under the walls and eaves, and oh, how narrow were those strips of comfort, ribbons of bliss! It was an effort even to look up at the numerous gaudily-coloured wats and walls, some of glittering mosaic coarse but effective, some of bold rosettes and imitations of flowers in earthenware applied in patterns, wild and picturesque certainly, and highly decorated, but nothing in the whole sumptuous precinct can compare in really artistic feeling with the decaying temple of Sabratumminawan out among the rice-fields; indeed,

as art these Bangkok wats are scarcely worth looking at, though the ethnologist and sociologist might speculate and moralize for ever upon these developments. The newest built wats are in worse taste than the older ones; barbaric enrichment can go no farther: it is with them as with European art in the age of Louis Quinze, a meaningless reiteration of certain forms, loaded on with no real feeling for beauty even in their arrangement. The taste, the fashion must change and something better may be evolved. These wats will drop to decay, and if new ones are erected they will be built in an altogether different style. Let all who wish to see Siam go as speedily as possible, for it is in a transition state: one generation will suffice to change all this phantasmagoria into something perhaps no better, certainly less exotic, but altogether different. To-day there is but one Siam, it has a character of its own, as distinct as that of China or Egypt, more so than anywhere else.

We were led to the door of the Museum, a renaissance building whose incongruity with the rest of the structures only adds to the charming embroilment of ideas we find throughout this most bewildering of capitals. The key had to be sent from a distance, of course; few people visit the museum. These lesser museums are always the chiffonniers of a locality, the shove-in-heres, where rubbish may be shot. As there are things suitable for presents, so there are things suitable for museums, objects that nobody wants. Some Oriental grandee once gave the Duke of Sutherland a large sapphire, a shapeless lump of

azure, 'of no value,' said the giver, 'only fit for a museum,' the Duke, being fairly well off, could afford to have it bejewelled into an ornament, the admiration of everybody; but most people can do nothing with bulky, unset treasures, save endow a museum with the same.

We had time for moral reflections as we sat in the portico, the Duke on the raised seat of the pillar post-box, Lady Clare and I on a rickety chair brought from a sentry-box, Mr. Cobham and Mr. Michell on a flat Runic stone, written in Sanscrit character, that reminded us of Scandinavia: not the only coincidence with those northern lands. Carl Bock has pointed out the exact resemblance of some of the wooden wat roofs to the old Norwegian timber churches of Hallingdal and elsewhere. Later on I shall speak of the identity of the Siamese (Laosian) native bag-pipes with those of Scotland.

Natives, some of them soldiers in full undress, some of them ragged dervishes probably, were lying about in all directions on the steps, on the grass, or on inches of shade, waiting to be stepped on maybe. The soldiers with their arms stacked and selves lying about in shady angles are merely palace-guards, not representing a military force save in the bad French cut of their uniform. There is no army in our sense of the word. They are good marks-men, I have heard, but this handful is no defence to the country; a weak army is worse than no army at all in a buffer nation. Siam is a kid amongst wolves. These gentle, peaceful people should be allowed to develop themselves independently; we do not want

to annex them, they are good neighbours to British Burmah ; we should prefer to keep them as good, independent neighbours, but we cannot permit the French to annex or protect them ; if the French threaten their independence, it may become our duty to take the Siamese under our protection.

They are shy of the proposed railway from Bangkok to Raheng, a town about two hundred miles up the Menam river (one of the divers railway-schemes floating in the air), which would meet the projected main line from Moulmein to China, because they know we could pour by it, at any moment, British troops into Bangkok. So the sleek, silky Siamese fence off the question with the Duke, whose opinion is in favour of this line, and Mr. Swan, the engineer, pretending to long for advancement and the railways, while really loathing and dreading them in their hearts. Prince Devan, when in England, entreated the Duke to come out to Siam and bring out a competent engineer, and now they will not even talk about this railway-scheme. 'In this climate it doesn't pay to do things in a hurry,' says the yacht's sage head-steward, and they think the same. *Après moi le—railway*—thinks Prince Premier, a youngish man too, not yet thirty-five.

The Siamese is polite and professes to love advancement and cherish telegraphs, electric light, &c., but scratch the skin and you will find under it a hatred of everything European. They only want to be left alone. This, at least, is the opinion of long residents here. It seems ludicrous in me to have formed any opinion at all, in my very short knowledge of

the country, but I can hardly help writing about this, as I was in the centre of all the talk, native and European. The *Straits Times* remarks: 'Siam has gone on her usual way; the leading statesmen and their servants talk a good deal about progress, in fact so much is talked that it looks as if they did not know where to begin.' The king, absolute monarch as he is, hardly dares move in the direction of western ideas because of the Tory body of the elder nobles, who view all progress with a jealous eye.

The Duke of Sutherland advocates the line to Raheng, with the future connection with Moulmein. The Siamese do not desire this junction with the projected main line to China, as they would be left out in the cold when India and China are commercially connected by a trunk line. They shrewdly think that railway communication between India and China will be to Chinese advantage rather than to theirs. 'Burma is our gate to China, the barrier which blocked our approach from the Indian littoral has been broken down, and therefore our north-eastern Indian frontier is of vastly greater commercial importance to us than our north-western one,'* which is mainly strategic and political.

The Siamese do not cotton to the idea of the Raheng railway at all. Prince Doctor tells me all the merchandise from thence can easily come down the river, and, being 'sparsely peopled,' (his very words), very little merchandise is likely to go up.

* Colquhoun's report on the railway connection of Burma and China. Exploration survey by Holt and Hallett.

They see—and say—that, of course, the English favour that line because of the possible and easy connection with Moulmein: this of itself is enough to make them timid.

If railways are to be made in Siam, a necessary evil, thinks Prince Doctor, the most useful and most paying lines in his opinion would be made in their eastern territory.

‘What, to connect Siam with French territory?’

‘Oh, dear no, but to develop the eastern and highly populous districts of Siam, which need development.’

This would put off the evil day, too, as this district is not yet surveyed for railways. It will take wild faith in a future and much talker-talkee to create the Siamese railways. In railway-planning, in the East especially, there are two main considerations—the through traffic and the local traffic; two widely different interests. Then there are the markets (Colquhoun carefully marks the distinction), immediate, those now ready for opening and markets of the future, those requiring education in civilized wants.

In Siam there would be none of the burial-ground difficulty that there is in China with the railway, where the line threatens the vested interests of the tomb. Cremation being general here, the ashes of the dead are preserved in urns; while the poorer Siamese are devoured after death by birds of prey, or their ashes washed to the ends of the earth by the rivers.

‘Time was,’ says Sir John Bowring, ‘when

Bangkok occupied the third place among the commercial cities to the east of the Cape of Good Hope —first Calcutta, second Canton.' Siam has folded its hands to sleep, and been forgotten. In the centre of a chain of railways, Bangkok might again occupy her former position with Calcutta and Canton. Meanwhile, as Colquhoun says, 'a population reckoned categorically at some one hundred and eleven millions and a half of people is as yet hardly touched by our commerce.' A census of the men of Siam proper, taken about thirty years ago, computed these at about eight millions, which would make twenty millions a low estimate of the whole population. Mr. M'Carthy, however, thinks ten millions would be beyond the mark. The population of Bangkok is variously estimated at from three hundred thousand to eight hundred thousand inhabitants. Several Europeans, Sir Andrew Clarke at the head of them, are here, besieging the king for railway concessions. The king's idea is, 'Siam farà da se,' and he wishes to keep the railway-schemes, if inevitable, in his own hands; and thus to introduce them very gradually. In the meantime, he makes the cremation festivities an excuse for postponing the question until the foreigners are gone.

'The real interests of the country are postponed to these childish shows, relics of barbarism,' say the prosaic promoters, peevishly.

Perhaps as true a statement of the case as any, in the Siamese view of it, may be seen in the following translation from an inspired native news-

HIGH LIFE IN ASIA.

paper, the *Sakyalanka*, of a fortnight earlier date, (28th of January, 1888), before Sir Andrew Clarke had won his railway concession from the king. Ideas of tense are still unsettled in Siamese grammar :

‘They compare railways with Indra’s flower, as they can be carried away in a moment everywhere’ (?) Only to one place on a line), ‘and those who want to use more prosaic language must still say that it is the most superior conveyance that can be devised.

‘Thus the inhabitants of Chieng-mai or Korat may be able to eat fresh plather,’ (a sort of fish) ‘which are sent by railway from Paknam in five, or at the most six hours, as soon as the line is constructed. As soon as railways will be constructed, people will settle in their neighbourhood, where there is now nothing but jungle or waste land, and if the people thus settle there will be cultivated land in places which are now the abode of tigers, elephants, and other animals.

‘If now people living in the provinces wish to proceed to Bangkok, or if they have to go on account of the corvée, they have to encounter great difficulties. They must provide themselves with food, as they will be a long while on the journey, which must be performed in boats: they have to break up their homesteads, to abandon their fields, and if they have bad conveyances there is still more trouble for them. If, however, railways are constructed, then, like angels, people will be able to leave their home, return to it, sell their goods in Bangkok or other places, buy others, all in one day; and this will be of the greatest benefit. In enumerating the benefits we do not know where to stop, and we shall therefore shortly say: Railways must be constructed in Siam, as their construction will contribute to the welfare of Siam in opening trade, increasing the revenue by collecting the duty on the merchandise, and their construction will contribute to the people, who will dispose quickly of their merchandise, and will be able to proceed easily from one place to the other, as if they were flying or carried through air If we read the history of the reign of His present Majesty during the twenty years he has now reigned, we must say

that Siam has travelled on the way of progress and prosperity, and has made the greatest strides, and, if we could measure the progress Siam has made, we should say it had travelled on the way of progress many hundred thousand miles, and it does not stop, as His Majesty, our august sovereign, is always endeavouring, and is never weary, to devise and think of means to promote the welfare of his country and the people. What he thinks is necessary for the welfare of the people he institutes by his grace and at the proper time. Now steamers are running everywhere: we have got the divine ear by which we can hear the speech of the whole world: i.e., we have telegraphs and telephones, through which we are in connection with the whole world: we have mail communication, by which people are enabled to correspond with each other. We shall now have railways, as His Majesty, in his great wisdom, has seen that they will be of greatest benefit to all. We, however, who are endowed with faith, trust, and gratitudo, should be ever thankful to His Majesty that we shall be ever increasing in welfare by the grace of His Majesty.'

The reader has waited long enough for the key and admission to the museum, but we were loth to leave our seats in the shade. All our thought was to do our duty, and get the sight-seeing over. We were like a naughty boy at his lessons. He does not really love them, nor did we, but the task had to be done, I heard Lady Clare mutter, 'Oh, bliss! we shall have done it, balmy thought.' This expedition has been hanging over our heads, ready to drop its dead weight upon us any day. Mr. Swan feigned a press of work, and stayed at home:

The museum is small and neatly arranged with a very mixed collection, chiefly of Siamese objects. They have a native bird of paradise in Siam. This has been disputed, but here is the bird, and they assured me it was native. Here is a Siamese long-

haired bear, with much likeness to the glutton. Here are models under glass shades of the legendary flying elephants, ponderous-looking objects a-sprawling in the sky of cotton-wool clouds, assisting in the air at the fight of the gods and the fiends. Oh, such fiends! The native fancy runs riot in fields of all sorts: thus they image out their sensation stories.

There is a large carved elephant tusk with a curious natural twist. The Siamese have a great fancy for any form of monstrosity; we Aryan races care most for the perfect normal type in everything: as perfection is never reached through monstrosity.

Here are many specimens of old Siamese pottery, chiefly bowls for rice and curry, of blue or enamelled ware: the manufactures that have now died out.

'Here are our Highland pipes,' said Prince Doctor, showing me an elegant form of Pandean pipes in a long bundle of a dozen or more of reeds.

But they have pipes nearer like the Highland bagpipes.

After walking through the museum, the queen having ended her devotions, we went round the pictured cloister where Siamese legends of all kinds are crudely painted on the walls; here were the flying elephants in full swing, and demons to which ours of the Middle Ages are very angels.

Half-killed but unconquered we still went on, determined to complete our task. We approached another and a famous temple—lo, its doors were shut—it seemed a reprieve; it was so hot that we all in our souls wished to give it up, but the keys were sought. We sat awhile on the steps of a

cloister in the shade listening to the tinkling bells ringing the eaves of the wats, gilt bells with the clapper formed of a gilt leaf which swayed with the faintest breeze. The Abyssinian calotropis, like that I gathered at Massowah, was here growing in the gardens at the angles of the temples. The courtyards of these wats are paved, the steps are frequently of marble, and there are many figures of the drollest modern statuary standing about, some images in modern dress with the quaintest stiffness, yet reality about them; one of them, a very stocky figure, seems to be a portrait model of the late Emperor Napoleon by a Siamese sculptor. In showing pictures of these sculptured figures in a photograph one has to mention that they are marble. Nature has been exactly copied, yet Art is not the result. Throughout these sacred and royal precincts there is gold, colour, and picturesqueness, but no fine art.

We entered the temple of the Emerald Buddha, a recently built wat, covered with many tinkling bells. The sacred image, made of the precious pale green jade, is seated very high above a mass of gold and splendour set with precious stones. There are numerous figures of Buddha and lamps about the shrine, with joss-sticks burning, and offering of flowers before the altars. Even here is no real art, though the walls are covered with gaudy painting.

The best things are the doors and shutters of fine mother-o'-pearl work inlaid on black, a native Siamese art very little pursued now-a-days.

Are the people grown frivolous or too greedy to work at what involves patience? No, it seems

these hordes have not yet 'grown European-hearted,' and care little for lucre, though the women, who are chiefly the money-makers, frequent the Chinese gambling-houses. The men are for the most part indolent; everything grows of itself to supply their few wants, and there are so few necessaries of life. It is a pity to see their elegant arts and handicrafts dying out.

Standing outside this temple of the Emerald Buddha are two white marble statues of Portuguese or Italian work, male and female saints, which were dug up in the ancient capital Ayuthia. They seem to be of St. Francis Xavier's time. One of them looks like St. Andrew, but without the cross. The Portuguese have left in Siam remarkable vestiges of their influence, and even Christian descendants of converts. The Dutch never went to Siam to convert anybody or anything except, as Sir J. Bowring says, 'men and merchandise into money.' No traces of the Dutch sojourn remain except some ruins of their factories:

We were next conducted to a still more recently constructed temple, built for the purpose of bringing the revered and famous crystal Buddha here; but to move the image, which now sanctifies an insignificant wat, would be of ill omen and would bring misfortune on the movers, so no one dares to do it, therefore this wat is not consecrated as a temple for worship. The fretted diaper work of the external walls is of steel and gilt, looking like gilded mirrors; the interior is frescoed after the Siamese fashion like the painted cloister. Here is an extremely fine shrine composed of the native pearl and black

inlaid-work, their speciality. There are fine specimens of the pilgrim's palm growing outside these temples.

After we had climbed up many more steep steps of pagodas—the steps are sometimes more than eighteen inches in the rise—and broiled us in white marble colonnades carved with flowers in very low relief, we felt we had fairly done the sight-seeing; there are plenty more temples and palaces in the enclosure, but we had seen the principal ones, and had enough of it. The terraces of the palace where the queen lives are decorated with large incense vases of bronze, the dark colour and graceful forms of which stand out in beautiful relief against the white marble of the palace. The palaces mostly have fanciful names; one is called the Rose-planting House, and another is styled the Royal Palace of the Invincible and Beautiful Archangel.* We had earned our play, or, better still, in this climate, the pleasure of seeing other people play; so in a long room below the vestibule of our palace we watched the native servants playing at ball, cleverly catching a light wickerwork ball and knocking it back with their heads, feet, backs, knees, anything. Their wild, lithe, active movements were entertaining and graceful. This was a relaxation to us.

I was too tired to attend Mr. Michell's usual Saturday afternoon reception, so I rested in the cool grey marble vestibule until I saw the carriages and the scarlet liveries at the gates beyond the courtyard at the foot of the steep stairs. At five o'clock we usually went for a drive. Steep stairs

* Leonowens.

are the custom here ; the temples have them horribly steep ; they are easy steps that are only the height of a dining-room chair. I have mounted some that are more like tables piled on each other. Why the staircases are so steep, and why one lives on the first floor, is because the Siamese are so accustomed to mount steep ladders to get in to their stilted houses. It is funny to see the coachmen, who are mostly waiting all day at the gates, don their red livery coats at our approach ; we sometimes see the footmen slipping their scarlet and gold jackets on their bare brown backs. The sentry stands and shoulders arms martially as we pass. We went for a dusty drive on a very ill-kept road. The drawbridges over the canals will impede the laying of the trainway that some of the European speculators here are anxious to get up a company for. Apparently it would pay well, as the rough native omnibuses are always loaded. Trains will not, it is thought, succeed so well here as steamboats, because of the bridges ; but still the roughness of the roads prevents rickshas coming much into use, as the men cannot easily run with them. The swing-bridges here remind one of those of Holland, but they cause a greater jerk to the carriages.

CHAPTER VI.

YOUNG SIAM.

They who to gather roses came, went back
 With precious gems and honorary robes ;
 And two bright finger-rings were secretly
 Sent to the princess.

FIRDAUSI.

MR. GLADSTONE in the *Contemporary Review* (1875) speaks of oriental work and art as that 'vast and diversified region of human life and action where a distinct purpose of utility is pursued, and where the instrument employed aspires to an outward form of beauty. Here lies the great mass and substance of the *Kunst-leben*, the art-life of a people.'

Big, big, portentous, but fine words to begin a chapter with, as Count Smorltork says, and I would use such or similar words were I writing a regular and exhaustive treatise on the country, such as a fortnight's stay scarcely qualifies me to do, even with native or English people always about me to tell me how to think, or were I writing a work called, say, 'The Sociologist in Siam ;' and yet I do not know what to think about the outward forms of beauty aspired to in eastern art, when I remember their mul-

titudinous representations of demons, diws, or devas. These are generally represented in human shape with horns, long ears, and sometimes with a tail, as Lord Monboddo says, 'depending from their gable ends.'

Perhaps, considering the heat, I had better go on in my easy slipshod way.

I was glad that we all resolved on making a rest-day of Sunday—indeed, we needed it. There is a small church here where service is performed in English. The congregation is mostly American. Prince Doctor brought me a flower of a beautiful orchid, the *dendrobium Fredericksonii*, yellow, with a purple eye, a novelty; only six plants of it have been sent to England, or even to Europe.

They have arranged a very nice plan for us to visit Ayuthia, the ancient capital of Siam; we are to be carried forty miles farther up the river in a royal yacht of light draught, and we are to go the remaining ten miles in a steam-launch, and come back the second or third day, according as we like.

In the afternoon, the Duke and I, with the chamberlain's son, drove to the pier and took the steam-launch to the yacht, where I wanted to gather together some picture-books and other things as presents for the little princes. The steward 'young chamberlain' under his protection, and showed him the yacht, with the firearms, engines, animals, &c.

The river was animated as ever with the various boats and busy traffic, the spired shores, veiled in fresh green foliage, a setting to the brilliant picture of life on the sparkling waters. 'Young chamberlain' is talkative enough when with me, though he

sits like a brute at table. He pointed out the police-boat, which is also a prison, and the water-works—for water is laid on in Bangkok. The royal palace enclosure has its own water-works. Though it is said there are no Siamese thieves, I now bear that there are plenty of burglars, especially river-burglars, in Bangkok.

No Europeans are permitted to visit the prisons. The Siamese rulers avow themselves conservative of their old traditions, and do not wish to follow our plan of petting our prisoners and making the prison a comfortable hotel for the idle poor. They think people who have committed crime ought not to find things comfortable. And yet they are a kind-hearted, gentle race.

'We think differently from you,' they say. 'If you want to describe them you must do it from fancy, but you sha'n't see our prisons; we won't have you printing these things from actual observation; the prisons are not attractive—they smell bad too.'

We often see, in passing from the river to our palace, gangs of prisoners in chains working or walking. Some of the basket-work made by the prisoners is admirable and wonderful, considering that they are not allowed the use of knives nor any tools but bits of glass. There is a stall for the sale of this work near the Wat Poh, where I bought some specimens of neat workmanship.

We steamed on to the Oriental Hotel, which had only been open the last nine months; for the last four months it had been quite full all the time.

Travellers are like vultures for scanning out comfortable quarters. Hitherto the hotel accommodation in Bangkok had been extremely poor. Here we chatted with Commodore Richelieu of the Siamese royal navy, really a small force of sixteen steamers commanded by Englishmen, but apparently consisting of the royal yacht *Vesatri*. We got upon the subject of prisons again; the Duke is interested in prisons, but a cloud hangs over the prison discipline of Siam, and the commodore had little besides hearsay to tell us. It is creditably believed that eight prisoners die per diem in Siam. In one place where three hundred prisoners were confined, one hundred and thirty of their number died in a very short time. This is vague, I know, but vague is the information that one gets.

We were told of a prisoner confined under a light sentence—indeed, he was supposed to be innocent. Well, the man was forgotten, an awful reflection, and he died in prison. The body was left there unburied for days—in that climate!—in this way. The official who had recorded the case was away, so his underling said, 'Ah, seven years' (or one year as it might be). 'My chief's away. I must write to the so-and-so department.' Well, they were away. 'Report the death, then, to the governor of the jail, he can't be away.' No, nor was he. 'But,' said the governor, when the matter was brought before him, 'I must wait till my clerk returns who has the papers about the case.' Thus the man was left there unburied for four days. A European officer said he knew, from personal knowledge,

several of such cases. It is said that, in the prisons, nearly half the inmates are slaves expiating voluntarily or for pay the wrong-doings of their masters or mistresses.

Mr. Michell joined us at the hotel, and we steamed on past the Club, from the verandah of which many gentlemen enjoying Sunday afternoon saluted the Duke in passing. The natives were flying kites of every hue and form, a popular amusement in Siam as it is in China. We passed the rest of our party out shopping at the riverside shops, and continued our course down stream. They still found curio-hunting a delusion. For all that we had dreamt of Siamese treasures we found very few, and wished we had bought more pretty things before. 'Never mind,' now we all said, 'we shall return home by Ceylon—that is the place for buying really good things.'

Mr. Michell, an Oxford man who used to row in the University eight, astonishes the natives by his skill with the oar; he had a small boat of his own with him to-day, we towed it on. The Duke admired the fine lines of some of the native-built boats. 'Yes,' Mr. Michell said, 'when they once get hold of a good model they can build from it wonderfully well.' Their gondolas are modelled on the Venetian.

How quaint are the large Chinese vessels with their shan cannon, sails of matting, and great eyes painted on the stern.

We passed a singular vessel with one paddle-wheel at the stern, of only eighteen inches draught, they

say, built to go one hundred miles up the river; she went three trips successfully in the last rainy season. They are getting up a flotilla company to run penny steamers in Bangkok. 'They will not pay just at first, perhaps,' says Mr. Michell, 'but ultimately the people will find them an immense convenience, as, for three months of the year, the tide sets always one way, and it is laborious to pull heavy boats against it.' The Siamese are not fond of labour. The flotilla company here will have less difficulty about their landings (piers) than the Irrawaddy steamboat company in Burmah, as the shore is firmer here and does not break away; but the success of that scheme encourages the promoters of the Bangkok flotilla company.

There is a dock company here, of which Captain Bush, R.N., is manager and proprietor. A good company, thinks Mr. Michell, but some people are of opinion that it might be re-modelled and developed. The river, so far, does duty for public baths and wash-houses. The Siamese are very cleanly in their persons; they bathe three times a day; the children swim like fish, and even tiny mites, almost babies, will handle a boat very readily. The men look dandy too with a cigarette stuck behind the ear, reminding one of Spain. The Siamese cigarette is strong; it is rolled in a lotus-leaf instead of paper.

Beggars are hardly ever met with in Siam. This is the one land where people do not want nor care for money; they are not even eager to sell the goods in their shops. Prisoners for debt are the only Siamese men who really work, save the king

and his Minister for Foreign Affairs. The people do not naturally covet money, but they will soon learn to do so from the Europeans and Chinese.

These people are as yet unspoilt by tourists, though they are learning to gamble. The gambling-houses bring four thousand catties, or thirty thousand pounds annual revenue to the government. One gambling-house pays a tax of one thousand pounds. So of course they will not be discouraged any more than our public-houses at home. The royal elephant, or Siamese catty, is eighty tirals, about eight pounds; the actual coin is rarely seen. The women, who hold their own earnings independently of the men, gamble most, so I am told; I had few opportunities of seeing it.

The Siamese women are finer than the men, they do all the work and develop their muscles. The Siamese men do a little clearing, but the women do the actual cultivation of the ground. Besides being fine in build, some of the women are very good-looking; one woman I saw who was really handsome, indeed a splendid-looking creature. The upper classes have a curious idea of grace in bringing their left elbow forward and bending it in an unnatural direction as far as possible.

We were taken to call on some agreeable friends of Mr Michell, that we might see the singular but convenient way in which several families live here, a sort of floating house, with drawing-room, dining room, and bed-rooms all built on the flat deck of a great barge moored to the shore; as this was a large English family they had additional bed-rooms and

bath-rooms on a second barge, and both were moored together. The ladies did not complain of being more troubled by mosquitoes than we on shore, and as it is always summer here the arrangement looked extremely comfortable. A large proportion of the inhabitants of Siam live in floating-houses.

The crimson of sunset was dying gloriously in the purple of evening as we returned up the river to take the carriage at the landing-place by the Royal Nautical School.

Our beloved 'Lappy' has turned up again; he swam back to the yacht, lean but thankful, after four days' absence. We rejoiced over our prodigal, but sensible and intelligent, doggie. There is one case of hydrophobia noted in the Siam Directory in this its eleventh year of annual publication.

Monday, the 20th of February, was one of the great days of the 'royal festivities' for so they are styled; the cremation proper, fixed for five o'clock: a sensible hour, when the air is getting cool. The Siam Directory tells us that the princess whose cremation we first heard of (before leaving England) was Her Royal Highness Mon Chow Sawab'aknari-ratu, one of the wives of His Majesty the King. She died July 21st, 1887. The other princes, children of the king and queen, are His Royal Highness Somdetch Chow-fa Siri Rajakukutb'andh, who died May 31st, 1887, aged one year and six months; Her Royal Highness Somdetch Chow-fa Bhahura tumimai, died August 27th, 1887, aged eight years and eight months; His Royal Highness Somdetch Chow-fa Treepejrutone Damrong, &c., &c., the

thirty-ninth son of His Majesty, died November 22nd, 1887, aged five years.

I dressed myself in black silk, with black lace bonnet and shawl, jetted ribbons and black gloves, for Court mourning, as the Siamese officials are wearing white panungs, that is the silk breeches, which are usually coloured. Black is worn as mourning by seniors to the deceased and by men of superior rank, white by juniors and inferiors: thus our chamberlain and Prince Doctor (Yai) wear white panungs; the Crown Prince also wears white as junior to the deceased princess.

Princely title dies out in the third generation—a very sensible arrangement—the son and grandson of a king are princes; after that a title distinguishes them as being of royal birth, but they are not princes. This system is necessary in a country where a king's consideration is determined by the number of wives he can afford to keep, an idea analogous to our social status being determined by the number of servants we keep.

The Duke and the rest of the gentlemen, with many sighs, braced themselves into uniform or levée dress; the heavy gold embroidery of the coats and collars is quite a martyrdom. 'Il faut souffrir,' &c.; one does indeed suffer in these climates for being fine.

We drove as far as the *chevaux-de-frise* near the Premane, which we had not previously seen by daylight, and, following our chamberlain through the crowd, were soon seated in a large room with a raised floor, some irreverently called it a barn, with

the European residents who were invited to the ceremony. From this place we, as His Majesty's own especial guests, were led by the several royal chamberlains to the reserved ground to hear the native band, strings, bamboo harmonicas, and drums, until called upon to assist in firing the pyres. For some particulars, for I could not see everything, I am indebted to the *Bangkok Times*.

'The spectacular effect of the whole scene was indeed gorgeous on this afternoon, the grand day, with its glittering crowd of princes and nobles, His Majesty seated on the raised dais, the numerous and curiously built chalets, the trophies of flags and other devices, the profusion of floral decorations, &c., &c., all of which formed a picturesque pageant that will linger for a long time in the memory of those present.

'The grand-stand enclosure for the royal princes was, of course, resplendent with uniforms and orders,'—it looked like a big jeweller's shop-front—and that reserved for the European residents was filled with a great concourse of people, all of whom wore as bright—save some, who sat, discontented and critical, in the seat of the scornful, side by side with the wrong people—'and merry' (!) 'an appearance as the most ardent supporters of the festival could possibly desire. In addition to these two stands, there was the royal pavilion for His Majesty the king, surrounded by guardsmen and attendants.

'As usual, a motley crowd of all nations under the sun, which Bangkok alone can turn out, were early upon the ground, and it required good super-

vision to keep them from surging too near in their ardour to see everything. And there was, indeed, a good deal to see; for within the whole enclosure there was not an uninteresting spot. Twenty-four pavilions, kiosks, and châlets in all had been erected, and, in their entire newness and fresh paint, the whole appeared as part of some fairy city. The pretty stalls, the multitude of flags waving in the breeze, the fresh and glossy leaves of creepers bursting through artificially-made hedges, the scent of roses and other fragrant flowers, the margin of a brook in a hollow lined with what appeared to be willows and watercresses, bees humming in the air, (!) 'groves musical with birds,' (birds, yes; musical, no), 'the whole formed a scene to gloat on, drink in, and enjoy.'

A branch of flowers and leaves, made of sandal-wood, was presented to each of us—of the Duke of Sutherland's party, I mean—for us to burn in the cremation-urns. 'It is too pretty to burn,' said the Duke. 'I shall carry mine home.' So said we all; but it was made an especial point that we should burn these, and the chainberlain promised that we should have some equally good specimens to take home as mementoes.

The ceremony of the burning was the first event to take place, at about five p.m., shortly after His Majesty's arrival—and ours. The king was carried in a gold chair, surrounded by about three hundred attendants, dressed in all the variety of costume incidental to the equipage of an eastern monarch. The whole of the Corps Diplomatique and all the

royal princes and nobles were also present to receive His Majesty, and immediately after his arrival the king led the funeral cortége, and lit the sacred fire, while the priests in attendance chanted Buddhist hymns. As soon as the king retired, many of the nearest relatives of the dead advanced, one after another, and added a burning taper or a lighted rod of incense to the funeral pile, and, after them, the Europeans were invited to do the same.

We were led across the path of plaited bamboo and up the stairs of the sacred Wat to the place of cremation, where the two funeral pyres, with the bodies of the two young princes, were slowly burning. The air was heavy with perfume and the burning of masses of eagle-wood (*lignum aloes*) very fragrant, especially when burnt, and various other scented woods. We lighted our sandal-wood flowers, and laid them on the heap of burning embers under the open coffins. The king was still there, looking, naturally, very sad and solemn. He recognised us by a bow, but we did not speak to him. To us the moment seemed too awful; and so he and the princes, in black, who were squatted round on the floor near the walls, seemed to feel it too, most of them looked down, and appeared to be murmuring words of devotion, though Prince Devan and one or two others shook hands with us and said a few words.

The dimly day-lighted chapel of cremation, though lofty, was most oppressive in its atmosphere, and to me positively sickening. I was glad when we were led down another flight of stairs to the open air again.

Immediately after the cremation they all burst out into wildest rejoicings, their cherished dead having now arrived safely at a higher stage of existence, and having approached nearer to Nirvana, or the Ineffable. To us the transition was startling, as our pearl of chamberlains took us in hand again, and marshalled us through the crowd, which fell into line, leaving a pathway for us to pass, and led us to seats immediately facing the royal dais, whither His Majesty went, after leaving the cremation-chapel, and where he presided over the numerous diversions which had been arranged in honour of the occasion. He came here shortly after our arrival, and was now surrounded by several of his children, dressed in white, as mourning for their little brothers, and wearing, as before, tiny wreaths of small white flowers round their top-knots of hair. We saw none of the ladies of the harem. We thus found ourselves seated nearest to the king, whose throne faced an open space, where ganics and the fireworks were to be exhibited.

Here began the wildest high jinks. The distribution of money to the natives took place as usual at cremations, when the custom is for the king to distribute money and presents to his people. The princes and relations of the king all give presents to add to the collection, and they each get a return present.

A grand scramble was made for the green limes enclosing silver coins, which limes the king took from large baskets placed by his feet. We all scrambled for them, and there were plenty for all.

Several of the Duke's officers were present, and had good places provided for them. The 'Sanspures,' as the sailors style themselves, were in the background, most active in the scrambling. The king seemed amused at seeing the sailors so eager after the limes, and shot plenty in their direction.

Then he flung hollow balls, like nuts, containing lottery tickets; many of these he fired pointedly at us, and, as His Majesty is a good shot, I had no less than seven of these mostly fired into my lap. He occasionally threw some limes and nuts among his children, and many among the courtiers near his throne. There was much laughter all round, even among the group of elder nobles and grandeses of Siam, dressed in cloth of gold, kincobs from India, I believe, and gorgeous stuffs, who sat close by the king in a transept to his left. It was droll to see us, our great Duke and all, scrambling; all of us including the principal European ladies in the place, Lady Clare in pale peach-blossom moiré and white Maltese lace, and my more than middle-aged self. Our palace may verily be the Palace of Calm Delights, but I shall always think of Bangkok as the City of High Jinks.

The humming, whirring sound of distant music of the Siamese band was audible throughout.

Then the Duke's party were called up separately by name, and we each received two special nuts from the hand of His Majesty. The numbers enclosed in mine gave me a symbolic ring made of a gold and a silver sacred cobra entwined, set with diamonds, and emeralds for eyes; the second ticket gave me a

blue-and-white tea-service on a small silver tray. It had now grown dusk, and the fireworks commenced by a simultaneous ignition of all the distant surrounding pieces, caused by the king setting fire to a dragon, which at once whizzed off from the throne, and set fire to the lofty pagoda standards of nine umbrellas tapering above each other, which all unfolded like fiery flowers as the light crept up their tall columns. This had an excellent effect. Many ingenious devices were exhibited, such as a beautiful fire fountain, figures of fiery monkeys darting out of the tops of high poles, &c. The lucigen light blazed in the centre, and lighted up two lines of men with lanterns, forming a colossal representation of dragons trying to swallow the moon, a reminiscence of the recent total eclipse. There were loud strains indicative of lamentation at the loss of the moon's light, and the clashing of cymbals represented their custom of striking on pots and pans when there is an eclipse, because they think this phenomenon is caused by the malignity of a dragon, which devours the two lights of the world: by making a great noise, they endeavour to frighten the animal that would deprive them of the light of day. It need scarcely be said that their efforts are always effectual.

The dragon-dances, and other entertainments of running figures, are well known to the Bangkokese, though to us the whole of the games and fireworks were novel, and an excellent as well as remarkable display; but the lamp-dance was a novelty. This was danced by sixty young girls with lighted globes

on their open hands, the lamps wreathed with flowers. This dance, which requires great skill, suppleness, and steadiness, was performed with remarkable grace. This was, perhaps, a revival of a favourite dance performed in the king's grandfather's reign, when Sir John Bowring describes the dancing as 'a slow motion, the girls holding a candle in each hand, gracefully turning it round.' The distant music that guided their footsteps sounded to us like mosquito-humming on a great scale.

The numerous girls inhabiting the part of the palace enclosure called the City of the Veiled Women are carefully trained as dancers, as well as to recite poems and to act. The female inhabitants of this populous city are by no means allowed to be idle. Here are made the wreaths and chaplets used at dinner-parties and ceremonies, and the sandal-wood flowers burned at cremations. The permanent population of this city was in King Chulalonkorn's childhood estimated at nine thousand; it was self-supporting and had its own laws, which were administered by female judges. One can get very little information about the present condition of this extraordinary convent city, where none but women and children live. At the end of the private covered entrances to these women's buildings is a bas-relief representing the head of an enormous sphinx with a sword through the mouth, with an inscription which Mrs. Leonowens translates: 'Better that a sword be thrust through thy mouth than that thou utter a word against him who ruleth on high'; which is interpreted to mean the king.

Shortly after seven o'clock His Majesty withdrew and the greater part of the enormous crowd dispersed; but amusements for the natives, such as theatrical performances, dances, &c., still went briskly on, and everything was ablaze with electric lamps and brilliant as possible with fiery decorations. The fete continued nearly all night.

Those who came late, so we heard afterwards, missed seeing the fencing which took place outside the royal enclosure about two p.m. We heard it was well worth looking at, for with the foil, sword, and bayonet the gracefulness and activity displayed by the combatants was beyond all praise. The suppleness of Siamese bodies and their quickness of eye here came out well, and showed that, if properly taught, the nation would be quite capable of taking an active part in their own national defence. Boxing was also exhibited early in the afternoon in a tent outside the Premane, and excited much interest.

. We came home to dinner after the fireworks; indeed we were too tired to wait till quite the end of these. It must be an exhausting effort to the king to carry out his part during the ceremonial fortnight. I was too fatigued to go myself to get any prizes from the tickets in the nuts, so I asked Prince Doctor and our chamberlain's son to get them for me. To give an idea of the variety of the presents I will say that mine were a crimson plush photograph-album highly ornamented, a liqueur-stand of Bohemian glass, an ornamental blotting-book, two silver network purses, a cotton panung, the common native dress, and an inkstand.

During the night a loud band promenaded this part of the city, playing the 'Dead March in Saul' and the Siamese national anthem, till about three in the morning, when the cannons were fired as usual to wake the priests for service in the various temples of the palace enclosure.

CHAPTER VII.

AYUTHIA.

That country abounds with rivers and palm-trees; there is also plenty of divers fowls, especially popinjays, which are not like ours. From hence you come into the ocean.

Voyage of Marco Polo.

WE are going this excursion towards Ayuthia in the *Sans Peur*, after all. Commodore Richelieu has undertaken (or been appointed, I do not know which) to skip us up, as he knows the river.

They welcomed the Duke on board with blue lights, rockets, and the bagpipes. Every berth is made available on board the yacht, which promises to be full of visitors. I enjoyed the comparative quiet of the yacht after the turmoil of night noises in the city.

When the anchor was weighed at daybreak, at this last moment the commodore sent a note to say he was sorry he could not come, but he sent a pilot instead. Prince Doctor came aboard early with his native body servant; our other visitors were here already. We heard to our dismay that no orders had been given about the promised steam-launch for the shallow part of the river, and

the yacht's launch is not calculated for us to go any great distance in her with comfort in this climate, one is too near the engine, and a mere awning is nothing; a wooden roof is indispensable. If orders come, the commodore says he will send the royal launch forward for us. The fact is the king, occupied with the cremation business, has forgotten it. The various notes and messages occasioned some delay, and we had to leave the matter to chance, after all.

The most fatiguing part of sight-seeing in Siam is the waiting about. The dear people are unpunctual, and we English are brought up to feel that if a train or boat is timed to go at six o'clock it is rather a bore if it does not go till ten o'clock. Then the plans are always confused and uncertain, partly doubtless owing to our want of knowledge of the language: and when Prince Doctor is absent the projects filter through the denser medium of young Mr. Swinn, who is doubtless bearing up for being a chamberlain like his excellent father.

No reliance can be placed on the Siamese word and their promises. They promise because they are too polite or too timid to say no. The king does his level best, but with his single head full of the cremation, and bothered besides by the promoters of the railways, he cannot be expected, he one man, sole absolute monarch, to remember everything. Perhaps one of the best arguments for a constitutional monarchy is the waste of other people's time caused by absolute personal government.

The river banks are pretty, and much like what

they are below Bangkok, though the river is narrower. We meet with teak-rafts occasionally and villages of houses built right in the water. There is plenty of life in these and the numerous bamboo villages half-hidden by the sugar-palms, (*arenga saccharifera*) coco-nut, and areca palms. Here the prickly bamboo is quite bare and wintry in its grey stems with the drought. We see plenty of men in elegant mauve and heliotrope-coloured panungs rowing, gondolier fashion, the smaller bamboo-covered oval-shaped boats,; by which we know that all the gay world has not gone to Bangkok for the festivities. Prince Doctor is reading 'Life on the Mississippi.' It is something unexpected to see a Siamese able to relish Mark Twain.

The river nobly foams and flows swirling on rapidly between its fringed borders of light-green trees, with an occasional contrast of very large trees of dark, almost black foliage, whose timber they say is an extremely hard dark-red wood, very valuable. Prince Doctor could not tell me its name in English;—indeed, he was so engrossed with Mark Twain,—he called it Meranda.

'Oh, I know it,' says Mr. Swan, 'Meranda.'

'What do we call it?'

'Oh, that's the Malay name.'

'Oh, when Swan doesn't know a thing he invents a Malay name for it,' says Mr. Cobham, laughing, 'and none of us can contradict him.'

I think it is the Calamander, a word corrupted from the Sinhalese name Kalu-médiriya, a name we have corrupted into Coromandel wood. Though it

is said that this tree is peculiar to Ceylon, where it is now very scarce and valuable.

We stop about noon at Koh Lai by a bend in the river, not a bad anchorage, near a neat village with peaked roofs, the houses raised as usual on stilts thirteen feet high, 'with ramps of hurdles for the domestic animals to ascend, whose stables are in the air.'* This is done to avoid inundation at the annual rise of the Menam, especially in curves of the river. There are many picturesque boats, and many heavy barges slowly poling up stream with great exertion.

'Can't we steam up any higher, so that we might possibly achieve Ayuthia, if all steam-launches and elephants fail?'

The pilot will do his best.

On again to where there are three fathoms of water, two fathoms at low tide, and a bad smell; but the pilot tries to get us up as far as he can. After all, we are obliged to return some distance as there is not water enough for us when the tide falls, so back to the island of Koh Lai. I hear question and answer going on at a distance.

'Is it safe to swim here?'

'There are no alligators here, are there, Prince?'

'Oh, not many; they come down more when the waters flow down fresh in the spring.' So in the swimmers jumped.

Though there is a strong current to swim against, the water is very warm, above ninety degrees; warmer at morning and evening than the air. The

* Turpin.

quantity of sediment in the river chokes the baths on board. We have towed up Prince Doctor's gondola, so we are going on an excursion, taking the native pilot with us. We set off about four o'clock, swiftly passing the returning north-country boats built for shooting the rapids ; here and there one with a tri-coloured square of three panungs, green, red-brown, and white, sewn together and hoisted for a sail.

Here the areca palm stands up erect and tall among the gracefully light feathery bamboo, which is really more exquisitely beautiful in Siam than I have seen it anywhere else ; a lovely background to the white sails on curved bamboo yards. The stiff lines of the numerous Siamese pagoda spires offer an agreeable contrast to the tufted palms. This part of the river is crowded with bamboo rafts, and the bamboo-woven oval-topped boats in which so many families pass a perpetually moving yet peaceful existence.

More than ever here do we see the daily, hourly use of the bamboo. To paraphrase Bacon, the bamboo serves for delight, for ornament, and for ability ; for delight, in私ateness of shade and retiring background ; for ornament, to build Premanes with ; and for ability, for house and furniture and for nearly every aquatic and agricultural purpose under the sun. As for the coco-nut palm, it is a truism that its uses are as numerous as the days of the year. The palmyra is a richer tree even than the coco-nut. The Tamil poets describe eight hundred different purposes to which the palmyra can be applied.

On the shore they are at once sowing, winnowing, and threshing rice, aided by the large-horned black buffaloes and other cattle which come down in herds to bathe in the river after the day's work ; while overhead are numerous flights of large white birds with thin black tails, looking like great white-winged dragon-flies magnified, or Siamese kites ; these are the paddy birds, a kind of white ibis celebrated in a Siamese poem, 'Ex. Supharet,' as a contrast to the vulture.

'Hateful, repulsive to the eye,
The ugly vulture floats on high ;
Yet, harmless, crimeless in his ways,
Upon the dead alone he preys ;
And all his acts, in every place,
Are useful to the human race.

'The snowy ibis, beautiful
And white as softest cotton wool,
Preys on the living, and its joys
Spring from the life that it destroys.
So wicked men look sleek and fair,
Even when most mischievous they are.'

But the paddy birds, methinks, are of some use ; they follow the buffaloes as these tread the seed into the soil, to prevent its being washed away, stalking along and devouring the worms and insects in the pits made by the buffalo's heavy tread. The effect is very odd of the burly black buffaloes each with an attendant white sprite with long slender legs and long beak ; two forms, as decidedly opposed to the idea of evolution as can possibly be.

Here is a barge-load of bricks ; they make them here : the Duke and Mr. Swan are at once interested

in pricing them for potential railway works ; then come swinging down the river craft that might almost be taken for pleasure-boats, with high rowlocks, the gondoliers with large palm hats and gaily coloured panungs, convoying home their loads of green stuff, gliding quickly past the pink and grey water-buffaloes standing up to their wreathing horns in the water. The native gondoliers are fine men, with muscles developed like those of antique statues. The bamboo dwellings up here are still always built on high poles like Malay houses, but with more elegant roofs because of the Siamese curve. A fish leaps into our gondola, a silvery mackerel-shaped fish, with two forward growing antennæ or whiskers.



The sunset is a crimson fireball, scorching to the last, I feel, as a crimson stream of light is fired at me across the purpling water; the fierce flame of the sky seeming almost to melt the bronze black limbs of the teak and the meranda. It will be too dark to see the palace of Bang Pahin, the king's favourite country-seat ; it is a good mile off even now. We pass a light-house on an island to the left, and behind it a wat, or temple, built like a modern Gothic church ; it is, indeed, a copy of one ; and a little further on the shore to our right (going up) is the Palladian palace of Bang Pahin. We landed here to see the buildings ; a white palace in several separate detachments in Italian renaissance, the favourite modern style in Siam. A very elegant Siamese wat, constructed chiefly of timber, stands in the centre of a piece of

water round which the palace is built. It is really a bathing pavilion of very beautiful design, built like a pier on piles or tall posts. Near it is a fine arched stone bridge, with lambs alternating with spread-eagles in Napoleonic French style. In the centre of a grass-plot stands a French statue of a nymph with a lute, more exactly described by Mr. Cobham as a young lady with a banjo.

While sitting here in the dusk waiting for Prince Doctor, who had gone to hunt up the gardener with the key of the gardens, which they say are very fine, we heard the toké, or tokay, a large lizard that shrieks tokay, tokay; the same as the tukto of Burmah. The natives count and tell fortunes by the number of times he says tokay, and gamble upon it. This one screams tokay several times and then gives a grunt of content. There is a small switchback line, not exactly a railway, in these grounds running up and down half-a-dozen or so of ascents and descents.

They are lighting fires in all directions under the bamboo houses to keep off the mosquitoes. It is growing dark, and we hear the gardener has gone to bed, so, as we shall pass this place again to-morrow, we give up seeing the gardens by firefly-light and return to the boat.

We steamed homewards by moonlight in less than two hours, going rapidly down stream.

Lady Clare and her brother, who had not made the excursion with us, had been seeing the whole business of preparing the rice, with the buffaloes treading out the ears, a slow process.

‘A mill would do it so quickly.’

‘But a mill means cost and calculation to these people,’ said Prince Doctor, ‘and they see no reason for being in a hurry.’

‘No, why should they hurry themselves in this climate? Once bring machinery into their paddy fields, and you will put pressure on life altogether,’ says the gently gliding Swan.

‘And you an engineer! How can you?’ say some.

‘Hear, hear!’ from the opposition.

The king is called Grand Lord of the Rice; but climate and custom are stronger monarchs than he. We comment upon their neat way of stacking the rice-sheaves.

‘Not in your roundabout English fashion,’ says Prince Doctor, remembering our ‘mows.’ ‘They are busy now threshing out their rice, in another month they begin to plough,’ continues our princely philosopher and friend. ‘Sometimes they have two crops, in this way; when the rice is cut down, it sometimes sprouts again. This second crop is not so good, of course.’

We remembered the admirable Mr. Barlow in ‘Sandford and Merton.’ We do sometimes feel like bears with a private tutor.

The dusk before the tropic dawn is full of songs and sounds of birds.

No tender to his yacht had come from the king. In the evening, when I was tired, I did not feel so bad when some of the hardier among the gentlemen were planning to start very early and go up the

river in our own steam-launch ; but when morning came I felt differently. Noises of packing up luncheon and starting for Ayuthia before daylight made me feel ' real horrid ' ; all the more so as being awake and quite strong I might have done it too, and now there would not be time for me to get ready without keeping them waiting. I tried to sleep it off.

What do I hear ? a call for early breakfast ! I hurry up and hear to my joy that a fairy launch has arrived to take us all up to Ayuthia. I am so glad, for I feared to have to trust Mr. Cobham for details of the architecture.

The launch belonged to Prince Doctor's father, a high Admiralty official, who had sent her up. I suspect the prince telegraphed for her to be sent. There is a telegraph beyond Ayuthia as well as to Bangkok. This is why he put hindrances in the way of the early start, for I had been surprised to find the exploring-party still on board.

We settle ourselves in the well-fitted launch, with a saloon where one sits on the carpet ; the open part of the vessel is shaded with wooden awnings and helioscene blinds. She is called the *Golden Needle*, she is so sharp, and painted yellow, as in fact she belongs to the king's establishment. Fond farewells to those who are left behind ; the heat makes those who are not enthusiastic sight-seers prefer the milder charms of Koh Lai ; reflecting that Koh Lai at hand is better than Ayuthia in the jungle.

' Good-bye, take care of your precious selves ; mind and wear flannel.'

We hear their chaff for some time, and see their

waving handkerchiefs as we set off, taking the prince's gondola in tow. There are only two steam-boats running regularly at this season between Bangkok and Ayuthia—pronounced as spelt, accent on the *u*. 'Later in the season,' Prince Doctor tells us, 'steam-launches do a good deal of traffic.' The scenery of the river, he tells us, becomes hilly and very pretty some four hundred miles, or three days' journey, above Ayuthia. The Menam, according to Turpin, the Frenchman who wrote a fair account of Siam over a century ago, in 1771, rises in the slopes of the snow-covered mountains of Yunan. The tradition about the snow rests only on hearsay. Prince Doctor is himself uncertain about it. I frequently met Mr. James M'Carthy, the explorer, who speaks of a vast plateau about four thousand feet above the sea-level, backed by lofty mountains, one of them nine thousand feet high. The river was formerly navigable higher up than it is now, for at present only in August, when the annual inundation of the Menam is at its height, can any but the lightest vessels navigate above Rabeng. During the flood the whole valley is like an immense sea, in which towns and villages look like islands, the streets connected by drawbridges. The inundation of the Menam begins at the end of July, and the water increasing two inches a day sometimes reaches thirteen or fourteen feet in height. This constant and regular inundation spreads fertility through the land, and it may be said the Menam is to this country what the Nile is to Egypt.

Turpin says it is an agreeable sight to see an extent of ten leagues presenting at the same time the picture of a sea and of a champaign crowned with grain. No dry land is observed, except at certain distances, on which are built large, idolatrous temples. The ears (of rice) which rise above the surface of the waters yield with ease under the boats, and rise again without being injured. The fish spread themselves over the fields, where they fatten and multiply. On the slopes of the banks advantage is taken of the rich deposit left by the river in subsiding to plant tobacco abundantly. There is plenty of life on the river now. The white jackets and billy-cocks, or sailor-straw hats, that they wear make people in the boats look like English. A double vessel of two boats joined together, a day-and-night nursery for the large small family, we call the *Calais-Douvres* or the Siamese Twins. As Aleck pipes up, and we pass the modern Gothic church-like wat at Bang Pahin, it reminds us of music on the steamers going to Kew. Some of the party, of course, do not understand this comparison. Birds are thick and unalarmed on the trees, as in that story of Marco Polo, where he says the birds grew on the trees, and dropped off at times. Perhaps these birds were really flying-foxes (*pteropus Edwardsii*), a gigantic species of bat, which sometimes look like a quantity of large, dark-brown fruits hanging from the branches of the loftiest fisuses, and detaching themselves in a startling manner, as they hang, head downwards, by one leg, they seem to drop, and then fly in circles from tree to

tree. Here are numerous kingfishers, and swallows are flying low.

After passing a pretty, well-wooded island of finest all tropical verdure, we leave the main river, and take a short cut by a canal. 'This is an elephant preserve,' says Prince Doctor. 'A large herd of elephants is always protected on this artificial island.'

At noon the water is cooler than the air, though the sunshine is tempered by the breeze. Prince Doctor points out to us a temple (wat), with its accompanying dagoba, built by his grandfather. 'If you build a temple, you get so many of your sins taken away. Everyone of any standing builds a temple. It is considered *infra dig.* to worship in any other person's temple; so Ayuthia is one mass of temples.'

The land is, to all appearance, well peopled; the river-banks presenting a pretty nearly continuous village. It is a happy-looking country up here, farmed by well-to-do people, 'the land smiling with cultivation' and abounding in sugar-palms (*saguerus saccharifer*). The sailing-boats collect rice from place to place, and then they carry it down to Bangkok. It is easy to sustain life here; every necessary grows so rapidly. Nature is their great manufacturer. The river too is inexhaustible in its supply of food. The creel-shaped fishing-nets are generally hauled up full of fish. Every Siamese is bound to give the king forty days' service in the army or in labour. This can be commuted for the eight ticals' poll-tax. This is quite fair—but a Chinaman only pays one shilling, half a tical, while

the natives pay eight ticals. The Chinese who are under European protection are exempt from poll-tax altogether. The Siamese are beginning to be awake to this grievance, notwithstanding that they are born philosophers.

On reaching Ayuthia, at half-past twelve, we at once find ourselves in a labyrinth of canals, water-side shops, and houses with curved and pointed roofs, and every house and shop has its high-prowed boat moored at its landing-stage. Ayuthia is not only an island, but it is also situated among several other islets, which renders its situation peculiar. It is still true as when Turpin wrote, that, although it occupies a vast extent, it contains but few inhabitants. At the water-side, it is true, it seems populous enough, but the gardens on the river-banks are more like groves, and the groves farther in again are more like forests. Three great rivers, which have their source in the higher lands, surround it on all parts, and cross it by three large canals, which divide it into different quarters, so that it can only be entered by boats. Turpin, who wrote while Ayuthia was still the capital of the country, and itself usually called Siam, says 'the south part, which faces the south, only contains idolatrous temples, where no affluence is seen but on solemn days.' The temples being now, for the most part, dismantled and falling to decay, there is little affluence seen here at any time, the affluence of gold at least; for there is plenty of everything else, to all appearance. There is more cultivation here than at Bangkok; the people at Bangkok are more engaged in trade.

But, delightful as archaeology may be as a study, in the study it has less charm in this most torrid part of the tropics at burning noon-tide! Our first care was to seek a shady place for luncheon. They offered us the shade of the old sacred elephant stables to lunch in, that have not been used since Ayuthia was the capital; stables just as they were left one hundred years ago, gilded posts and all. But these were too grand for us, and not draughty enough.

We were then taken through what looked like a clean and neat part of an old-fashioned country town or village to a mango-orchard surrounded by high walls, with rounded battlements, at one end of which is a lofty tower, with stair-cases in it, which is a now disused observatory, or look-out. We at first took it for a pagoda, because of the offerings of flowers and votive toys laid on the steps and slabs of balustrading at the entrance; but this is no safe guide, for, as in Ceylon, these Buddhists place flowers on any slab they find, taking it for an altar. A whistle, a sort of cat-call, from aloft.

'Fine view up here, Mrs. Caddy,' shouts the Duke, who, as usual, had climbed to the highest point.

I had meant to average it in the heat (one p.m., thermometer boiling-point in the sun), but for very shame I climbed up and saw a vast tropical forest, pierced for miles round with white or golden pagoda spires, with rivers winding about among the verdure. This is the present aspect of Ayuthia, which became

the capital of the country in A.D. 1351, and was devastated by the Burmese in 1751, when Bangkok became the royal residence, and trade at once followed the court. The native name signifies Terrestrial Paradise. It is indeed a paradise as seen from the observatory, or rather a sea of verdure, melting away all round into an infinity of blueness, in which stand up the varied forms of the temple roofs and spires, more various even than those of Bangkok: some pyramidal, some column-like, some like stalactite needles, some expanding like lily-cups, or diminishing in spirals of delicate proportion. It was a lovely view, and utterly unlike anything I had ever seen before. 'Nothing to Darjeeling, of course,' as we understood from Mr. Cobham. The observatory is considered a ruin, but the timbers are wonderfully well-preserved considering it has been left without repairs for one hundred years. It is the same with the temples, which now belong to nobody. One understands why, by what Prince Doctor told us. The builders and proprietors quitted Ayuthia, but could not carry away their temples with them.

We descended slowly and painfully. The Duke struck a match and began exploring a dark passage.

'Where are you going, Duke?' shrieked out soprano, alto, tenor, and bass, who besought him to take care of his precious life and the interests of the life-assurance companies. 'Cobras, alligators, tigers, spiders!' shrieked the chorus.

The men of the royal yacht *Vesatri*, a detachment of whom had been sent up the river with us in the *Golden Needle*, spread matting under the mango-

trees ; and oh, how glad we were to see the seltzer-bottles and to hear the popping of the corks !

“Leave but a kiss within the glass,” says Prince Doctor, showing off—‘ah ! that wouldn’t satisfy even a lover to-day.’

While we lunched, a gang of shackled prisoners were turned in at the farther end of the orchard to work. This might have been their regular task, but it seemed to us as if the overseers wished to study our manners and customs, and the prisoners themselves did nothing else.

‘They don’t work by the piece here, I presume ?’ said the Duke of Sutherland.

We sent for river-water—the best here ; not all the soda-water in the yacht could have diluted our claret sufficiently—and the *Vesatri* men, after bringing coco-nuts, ducked and skedaddled. A tall man in blue, who took the lead among the attendants, and sprang from goodness knows where, hewed the tops off the green coco-nuts, and we drank and were comforted ; he cleverly fashioned spoons from the soft shell, and we scooped the gelatinous young pulp.

‘Gallumptious !’ said we all in Siamese, and translated it to the Duke.

To rest at noontide under a tree is my ideal of enjoyment—ah ! what is it in the tropics ! Prince Doctor fired the dry mango-leaves near him, ‘to keep off the alligators,’ as he said. I thought the whole grove would be set on fire, but owing, I suppose, to the vegetable moisture, it could not make head against our efforts to extinguish it. One seldom sees jungle-fires in Siam.

‘They ring the mango-trees to make them bear fruit,’ said Prince Doctor, becoming pleasantly instructive, as usual. This answers to root-pruning with us.

We sat listening to his words of wisdom and the song of the birds, Mr. Michell’s speciality of study. There is a Siamese bird very like a magpie, and one, a green bird, with a note very like a blackbird; there is also one song like a thrush. Several of the birds’ songs in the mango-grove resemble those of English birds. Some of us were rather surprised to hear them singing so freely in the shade at midday. The specialists were all ready with a theory.

‘It is pleasant to hear specialists talk; one feels like being at a lecture, easy and lazy, letting some one else get up the learning,’ I thought, and unreflectingly said it aloud.

‘Alas! it goes in at one ear, &c.’

‘No, in at one ear and out at the note-book.’

‘There’s one prisoner gone mad,’ observed the Duke, suddenly looking up; ‘he’s actually at work.’

Mr. Michell and others pretended to long for work likewise.

‘Don’t go off and explore!’ we all cried, beseechingly.

‘It spoils the harmony of the—ahem!—evening,’ said Prince Doctor, the most English of us all.

‘Find those fat curly cigars, some of you, do, and quiet them,’ said Mr. Cobham.

‘It’s all very well for you who live at home at ease in the country to go off sight-seeing. I live in London, and can’t sit under a mango-grove every

day.' I addressed them all collectively, and the Duke in particular individually.

'I've been sitting in the boat for hours and want to move,' his Grace replied, pathetically. So he had, and on the floor, too, of the carpeted section of the launch.

Conscience-stricken, we let him and Mr. Michell depart without another murmur, though they were a loss to us. Most of them go off to make studies of the place, Prince Doctor casting a regretful look behind. Aleck packs up the baskets and goes off too with the Duke's chief engineer, who had come up in the *Gold'n Needle*. The prince's boy looks pensively at the packed luncheon-baskets, and wearily—a true Siamese—as if he would not lift one of them for the world; in his purple silk drapery, his glossy locks rubbed with the oil of the doksaratha, flower of excellence, looking like Ouida's Amphion, as I always call him. He signals to four *Vesatri* men to come, while he stands gracefully on one leg, twisting the other round it, and makes the men divide the weight of the baskets. I stayed in the orchard finishing my sketch. Mr. Cobham had fallen asleep on a mat comfortably arranged under a tree at some distance from the scene of decampment. The prisoners continued their work of looking on.

The energetic explorers went to a gambling-house, where the Duke won a tical, which he gave to an old woman who taught him the game. Prince Doctor reappeared; he said he had come on the Duke's part to call us to go sight-seeing.

'Well, let us go,' I said, reluctantly putting up my sketch-book. It was quitting beatitude under the mango-trees. A troop of women and children prettily dressed had come in to stare at us.

'Isn't it a pity to disturb Mr. Cobham's repose?' says the lazy prince, lighting his cigarette.

I suggested letting him sleep on.

'We can't leave him here alone in this wilderness with a lot of—crocodiles.'

'Then we must just stay and protect him,' said I; and we stayed.

Presently Mr. Swan came and hauled us out. He said the Duke was pacing up and down impatiently waiting for us. False man; lo! his Grace was sitting quietly in a shady temple, chatting with Mr. Michell, his cigarette not smoked out.

We climbed down the difficult steps of the steep bank, bordered with rungeāh, a sort of purple-crimson lotus, found in many pools and marshes of Siam, into the gondola, the Duke and Mr. Michell sitting on the roof, to go to the place where they catch and tame the elephants. We crossed a common abounding in hares, and covered with short turf and wild flowers, and a kind of whortleberry growing long and gracefully in its fruit-stems, the fruit in all hues of green, pink, and purple, and in the thickets long stems of 'wait-a-bit' thorns. Hither they drive the elephants every third year. In one post of danger there is a tall fence, a sort of gateway, or deep archway, formed of high stout poles or pillars of teak firmly fastened together by cross-beams overhead, where the men can take refuge, as

it is too narrow for the elephants to pass. Round the ground is an elephant-proof fence of teak poles driven into the earth at intervals of about two feet. They sometimes drive two hundred elephants into this enclosure. They have fifteen wild elephants now ready for taming, but to-day they had only one in the sheds, and he looked gentle enough.

We hurried down to the boats to go on further and see a wat, though most of these, as we saw from the observatory, were miles and miles away. Ponies or elephants ought to have been provided for us to ride about Ayuthia, the distances are so great; it reminded one of Babylon, which enclosed its own gardens and corn-fields within its walls, a province rather than a city. It was impossible for us to get at most of the temples. I regret this now, but at the time we were thankful for this small mercy. The heat was intense: the water was, so to speak, boiling in the soda-water bottles.

‘Don’t take me to see any more sights, Prince; carry me home to England,’ sighs Mr. Swan, mopping his face; ‘carry me home to die.’

‘There is a wat to be seen.’

‘Oh, I shan’t see any more wats.’

We were all not sorry to hear the Prince speak disparagingly of the wats. Of those whose outsides we saw, some of them are highly gilt, and many of them in a very ruinous state, but beautiful as reflected in pools islanded by clumps of the crimson lotus, and surrounded by mango and bread-fruit-trees. The natives say there is nothing highly artistic in the details of their decoration, but of

this I am not sure that they are fair judges. Sailing below the high banks of the canals and rivers it was not possible to get near enough to see the minutiae.

'They hold service in the wats on the fifteenth day of the waxing moon and the eighth day of the waning moon,' says Prince Doctor.

I don't quite understand this, except as the day after full moon and the week after that; but I give it as he said it.

Turpin says, 'Their Sunday, called Vainpra, is on the fourth day of the moon; in each month they have two grand ones, at the new and full moon, and two less solemn on the seventh and twenty-first.'

But I could never get two people to tell me alike about this. Their week is composed of seven days, each of which has the name of a plant. Their Sunday does not exempt them from labour; only fishing, which destroys life, and is therefore held in disesteem by the Buddhists, is forbidden on these days.

The houses in Ayuthia are frequently built of teak instead of bamboo exclusively; their appearance is neater as well as more national than at Bangkok, and pretty with scarlet-runner beans twining up the cane garden-fences. Flowers are abundant, including the rare *gmelina histrix*, a plant peculiar to Siam, blossoms pale yellow with brown calyxes growing curiously in pairs, two flowers out at a time; a quaint flower reminding one of Siamese buildings somehow in its double hornedness. The population is more distinctly Siamese; there are

indeed, few Chinese here; the open round basket-shaped hats are generally worn by men and women.

We intended to go to where the large feather-fans, an Ayuthian speciality, are to be obtained; large fans like those used as punkahs in the king's palace. Unfortunately, there was not sufficient depth of water in the canal leading to the fan-shop, and we must have made nearly the circuit of the city to get at it by the larger canal. The water-ways are all lined with bamboo houses, not by any means always on stilts, though possibly those not built on stilts are floating houses and rise with the tide, and the fronts of the houses are crowded with bamboo oval-tilted boats of the national Siamese shape. The houses all have the curved roofs and horned gables that give all Siamese buildings, large or small, such a distinctive character. We went up one of the 'natural moats' with banks unusually steep. The city proper is built on a peninsula made an island by art. The river-water is cleaner here than lower down the stream; a man standing in the canal was sousing himself with water from his brass bowl with real enjoyment. Sponges are seldom used here, they would harbour reptiles.

'Let us go to a café.' Proposal received with acclamation. But there are no cafés in Ayuthia. They have never heard of ices; it is quite a provincial town. In returning to Koh Lai we made tea with water from the engine and cooled it with soda-water; it was too strong and horrible. Oh, poor Prince Doctor's wry faces! We dabbled in the river, our sleeves were wet through with splashing;

never mind, we do not get rheumatism here as we do in our favoured land.

We were home very late for dinner. Our conversation at table rather horrified the Prince ; we talked of our kings and queens, anointed sovereigns embalmed in history, with free criticism. We talked of Mary Stuart, and even whispered some scandal against Queen Elizabeth.

'How well you are for your queens,' said Prince Doctor, losing his correct English in his horror at our disloyal comments. 'You don't deserve any kings or queens, if you can talk about them like that.'

'But they are all dead,' we cried ; 'dead as Queen Anne.'

'To the dead we should be doubly respectful,' he said, solemnly. He was perfectly right.

I heard later, from a fellow-student of his, that Yai Sanitwongse, Prince Doctor, took the prize for English from a lot of British fellows in his second year at Edinburgh. He doubtless paid scrupulous attention to his grammar. He is a good specimen of the golden youth of Siam, who have adopted European learning without losing their nationality ; a great improvement on the old school, whose whole happiness consisted in insensibility.

I gave Prince Doctor the volumes of Mark Twain that I had with me, as he relished them so much ; the Duke gave him a handsome revolver ; all of us gave him our blessing. We were greatly indebted to him for the pleasure of our trip.

'You will be glad to put yourself into the meat-

safe again, Mr. Cobham,' said the Prince. He meant behind the mosquito-curtains. Mosquitoes are very troublesome on the river.

Here we are near Bangkok, turned up again like bad ticals. A raft and a large Chinese boat ran into us and damaged themselves, that is, the boat had its oval roof lifted off. There was plenty of bad language used, but as we did not understand Chinese it did not set us a bad example.

Our polite chamberlain welcomed us with his best English and his best bow, standing with his feet close together, Austrian fashion, to bow as he presented me with a fan of pink feathers, prettily painted.

Sir Andrew Clarke, Mr. Gould, the British consul, and Doctor Gowan dined with us, and Mr. McGregor came later in the evening; the talk was as instructive as usual. At close upon midnight the chamberlain and Prince Doctor, in full white Court mourning, went to the Premane. It was the second and last grand ceremonial of the cremation, and we perhaps ought to have gone, but we felt tired; and, besides, it seemed so greedy to go again and scramble for lines and nuts. It might not have the same zest as the first time.

I found a white chameleon inside my mosquito-curtains, a pretty, graceful creature who would have devoured the stray mosquito that always gets inside; but I lost my presence of mind and brushed the elegant animal out. Somehow I did not fancy having a lizard within my curtains.

We have been less worried by mosquitoes than

we feared ; we were told we should find them in Bangkok as large as rats ! and really other insects have not troubled us at all, nor noxious reptiles of any sort. It is a fifth popular fallacy that serpents are momentarily seen in the tropics, and habitually sleep under your pillows.

CHAPTER VIII.

THIRTY YEARS' PROGRESS IN SIAM.

' And sell you, mixed with western sentimentalism,
Some samples of the finest Orientalism !'

BEPPO.

AN invitation from Prince Devan to meet the Duke at ten a.m., and talk about the railways with him, was accepted by his Grace, and at once postponed by the Siamese prince till seven this evening. We suspected that this did not mean business.

Two gentlemen, just come back from prospecting the gold-mines on the west coast of the Gulf of Siam, say there are millions (?) better say hundreds) of shafts of former workings. At the present value of money, &c., the cost of these works would represent millions sterling (which is probably what they meant). They found the unhealthiness of the climate far over-rated: they took abundance of medicines with them, and used none, as not one of the party had the least touch of fever. Former explorers lived hardly, defied the sun, fed on native diet, and drank unfiltered water from the jungle rivers; naturally, they all got fever. These men took proper precautions, and remained healthy.

Besides these gentlemen, we also entertained at tea Mr. Cooper, an explorer and surveyor of mines, &c., and the Italian Cavaliere Nosotti, concessionary of the gold-mines, &c., on the Malayan coast belonging to Siam.

Some of our party went to tea on board Sir Andrew Clarke's yacht, and some went off, in full-dress uniform, to the Premane. Among the prizes drawn to-day in the scramble for nuts, &c., were a dog-cart, an elephant, a buffalo, and some ponies. The lucky winner had to ride them, according to custom, past the king. This always causes great laughter, especially when, as on this occasion, the riders, being townspeople, had evidently never mounted elephants or buffaloes before. Supposing any of our party had won these things, what should we have done? We might have hired a deputy to do the riding, but we could not have carried home our prizes in the yacht with us.

I went to Mr. Michell's Saturday reception, and looked on while his friends played lawn-tennis in the royal garden, which is just behind his official residence. The explorers and surveyors were there, too; so we had plenty of talk. Society here seems very pleasant; it is almost too small to be split up into cliques. Perhaps the tea was the least European part of the entertainment; it was so delicate in colour and flavour.

The seven o'clock interview with Prince Devan was again postponed; but in the Premane (whether we adjourned after dinner) we accidentally met the Prince, and the Duke and he, with Mr. Swan, went

off for a short talk. Prince Devan says he will have the proposed railway-line surveyed, which will take two years. Sir Andrew Clarke's scheme was the one eventually accepted. It may be, commercially, the best, though perhaps not politically so.

The Premane was crowded, and illuminated as before; only the reserved ground was this evening kept exclusively for the grandees. It is a gay scene as ever, with its brilliantly-lighted kiosks and temples, and the royal buildings. It is difficult to believe that such solid-looking Italian-colonnades and galleries are made of paper and bamboo, and all to be swept away so soon. Lamps of green glass and red paper are wreathed about the corridors and windows, which are draped with black and white, broad-striped curtains.

How like the 'Arabian Nights' it is to see these three slaves in white garments approach our party with refreshments, and kneel and prostrate themselves in offering the huge silver trays. The priests' attendants lie sleeping all about the grounds near the cremation temple, chiefly on each side of the plaited bamboo-path. The hundreds of priests each recite the liturgical office, a certain number chanting at a time, until all the priests have been through the service. Discordant conches and liquid harmonica sounds are mingled with the continuous chanting.

A priest went mad last night, and struck about him with a sword. He hit at a sentry, who stuck him through with his bayonet. The priest has since died. No inquest has taken place, but official public

opinion considers it justifiable homicide on the part of the sentry.

The king and princes remain here sometimes all night. The king has a suite of apartments specially prepared for his use in the Italian gallery, draped with black curtains, with a narrow white border, on the first-floor; so that His Majesty can pass to the cremation chapel—which is on the same level—without going down into the gardens and up the bamboo-plaited path and staircase.

My friend the shaggy-headed Prince Pichonier is here barefooted, and in black. Several of the other princes are also barefooted. Some of them are studying the Dharna padam, Path of Virtue, the Buddhist Bible. They seem more melancholy to-night than usual. I hear they were all much attached to the princess whose cremation ceremonies are now being observed.

The jumble of ideas, ancient and modern, eastern and western, is quite fatiguing in this form of life, where things barbaric dying out contend to the last with the utmost novelties of civilization; all of it, both old-fashioned and new-fangled, smothered in ceremonial and splendour.

The reveillée on Sunday morning is very European in sound, and the word of command to the soldiers gruff in tone, like our officers give it to the volunteers.

I packed up a well-bound and illustrated 'Life of Queen Victoria,' with Her Majesty's latest photograph in addition, and a pretty picture-book of etchings with poetry for the little five-year-old prince. I packed

the parcel up with Christmas cards, and wrapped it in silk and ribbons, copying the address as Prince Doctor had written it in my note-book, Thoon Gramon Fah Lek. I showed it to our chamberlain to ask if that was correct. He smiled, but said it would do very well. It appears Fah Lek means little prince, and is not his name at all. I wrote a letter accompanying the parcel to the Queen asking Her Majesty to allow her little prince to receive it. The same afternoon I received a pretty message of thanks from the palace, and the little prince sent me two small enamelled silver trays of native workmanship 'with his love.' Mr. Michell tells me I am much favoured in having an immediate answer to my letter and present; people are usually kept at least three days before getting a reply. The chamberlain's pretty little daughter was brought in to see us from his house in the country. We found some European presents to give her.

Mr. M'Carthy, lately the hero of the Royal Geographical Society, took me out in his gondola, towed by his steam-launch, cruising in a canal lined with busy shops, set among tall elm-like trees and palms and plantations, that I had not previously explored. I bought some native hats and curiosities, and some of the curious Siamese toys that they are clever in constructing out of painted palm-leaf and coloured paper; outlandish forms of fish, grinning dragons, and amusing absurdities. They make tiny but clever painted earthenware models of their ladies at a feast, with very little to eat perhaps for so numerous a company: the figures dressed in gay scraps of

stuff are seated on the ground, standing, or kneeling, but always bending forward the left elbow in what is their ideal of refined elegance in feminine attitude. I enjoyed my trip so much that I was sorry I had to rush home to dress for Mr. Michell's dinner-party. From my room I heard processional music still going on outside, and operatic sounds from single instruments, and then a crash, sounding like a Wagnerian grand finale. They were removing the ashes of the cremated princes to their final resting-place in the palace. I could see the standards and parts of the procession from my windows: but processions had palled upon us, and we did not care to go outside to look on.

They have spread a collection of Siamese musical instruments on a carpet on the floor of the yellow drawing-room, between the writing-room and the large marble vestibule.

The instruments are one large European drum and one smaller drum; two harmonicas in the shape of ivory boats, on stands, with keys of resonant bamboo. This resonant bamboo is extremely rare, and precious accordingly. One of these harmonicas has three octaves, the other instrument, lower in tone, has two-and-a-half octaves.

A light frame, nearly a circle, made of bamboo, is set with a sort of bells of white metal; the performer sits cross-legged in the centre of this instrument and strikes the bells around him. Two violoncello-shaped instruments with three strings played with a plectrum. Two pairs of a Siamese form of cymbals.

A sort of vase of Siamese nielloed metal-work, shaped like a bottle, with serpent-skin at the opening for a drum: with this is a metal disk to fix on the foot and strike at the same time as the serpent-skin is beaten. The instrument is said to be Malayan.

A sort of violin played with a short bow. Two sets of ordinary cymbals and bones of an ornamental kind complete the orchestra. They are very pretty instruments, especially the boat-shaped harmonicas, which are extremely elegant. About fifteen men compose the band, which is the same that came to England and played at the 'Healtheries' exhibition. The bandsmen, who are unusually dark for Siamese, look like Christy minstrels in their European evening-dress and white ties.

We listened to this Siamese band, now brought into the great vestibule, till it was time to drive down to the pier where we were to take boat to go to the dinner-party. The musicians played brilliantly. Solos on the harmonica, accompanied by the violin played by a small lad with the fingers and no bow, produced a rippling fountain of sound truly delicious. They wound up with 'Rule Britannia,' an air with running passages particularly well-suited to their instruments, as we went away to the carriages.

We met the broken-up funeral procession on its return, but it did not delay us much. We went in the steam-launch to the Oriental Hotel, where Mr. Michell received thirty-six guests, ladies and gentlemen, at a well-served European dinner, with punkahs waving—the only time we saw them used in Siam.

It seemed very home-like, and gave us a good idea of the state of European society out in those far-off regions. The journey by moonlight on the river back to the Palace of Calm Delights was delightful.

I found a beautiful bowl of flowers on my table on coming home. The room was bathed in the perfume of the green flowers with long green leaves, a sort of night-scented daphne, only more lemon-like in freshness, and with larger leaves and blossoms.

The Siamese cultivate flowers that are scented at many different times of the day or night, and they plant them in their gardens in situations according to the rooms they chiefly use at these certain hours of the day—or night. The small white mali flowers the children wear round their top-knots are early night-scented.

Monday, February 27th.—Our last day in Bangkok, and cloudy, so that we can use it to advantage. While the others are all gone out shopping, I have asked young Mr. Swinn to take me to see the two great temples, Wat Poh and Wat Chang, or Giant Temple.

The walled enclosure of the Wat Poh, or Father of Temples, surrounds a marvellous gathering of religious buildings of most varied form, colour, and strangeness; a wondrous mingling of the grotesque and picturesque, with needle-pointed spires so numerous that it is said no one has ever been able to count the pagodas twice alike.

These groups of temples and clusters of pointed

pagodas are all set in a pavement of diagonal slabs broken at intervals by flowering shrubs, such as oleanders, jasmines, and temple-trees, and many plants new to me, partitioned off occasionally with fences of pierced and enamelled tiles, bluish-green, brown, and dark blue, that look like Chinese manufacture, and set about with pagodas and images either of earthenware, or carved in stone of wildest and most demoniac hideousness.

In one of the temples the cloisters are lined with rows of gilded Buddhas seated cross-legged in meditation, the attitudes being only slightly varied. The image usually has the right hand on its knee ; sometimes the left hand has a coin, a spherical odd tical, or a jewel in it, or it is extended patiently waiting to receive it as alms. Occasionally, but rarely, the right hand holds a tical. Behind the seated Buddhas the bo-tree is often represented. There are nine hundred of these images ; their height from the foot of the pedestal to the crown of the head measures nine feet. Before one Buddha of enormous height a gilded elephant kneels in adoration, lifting up his trunk as they are trained to do in homage to their superiors. The elephant is their symbol of wisdom, but I have seen no elephant-headed idols here in Siam like the Hindu images of Ganesh, the god of wisdom.

The colossal figure of the dying Buddha in another temple is the most striking object I have seen in Bangkok. This massive recumbent figure reaching to the lofty roof is fitted in between the rows of massive square red columns ; its head, reclining on

the right arm, is almost lost to sight among the beams of the roof, but its appearance is thus rendered only the more mysterious and profoundly striking. The figure is solidly gilt all over, in gilding of quite appreciable thickness, now peeling off in large pieces of gilt black stucco, which are strewn all round the figure, but in its vast size the blotches are scarcely perceptible. The length of this great gilded Buddha is one hundred and sixty feet, the length of the sole of the foot is seventeen and a half feet. The foot soles of this gigantic figure are elaborately wrought with Siamese inlaid work in mother-of-pearl on black, with scenes from the life of Buddha ; the elephants and the figures generally, with the flowers and arabesques, are all inlaid so as to give full value to the colours of the pearl. Buddha is always imaged in one of the three attitudes : reclining asleep ; cross-legged in meditation under the bo-tree ; or standing preaching. When the standing figure is benedictory, mostly the first finger meets the thumb of the raised right hand, the other three fingers are extended straight. So placid is his expression, that one always yawns on looking at a Buddha. The black doors and shutters of some of these temples are likewise admirably inlaid with this Siamese marqueterie, of which specimens are so rare in Europe, and will always be rare, as the art is dying out. Young Mr. Swinn was not extravagantly interested in architecture, but he seemed to think it delightfully funny that I should be so ; it was altogether a new light to him, and he became much more interested

himself in the temples in showing them to me. He had been here and to Wat Chang frequently in processions and on state occasions, but had never concerned himself with the buildings themselves. While in England he had not visited St. Paul's nor Westminster Abbey, though he had been taken to the Crystal Palace and the Houses of Parliament. This Wat Poh is an old temple, or rather group of temples, and is, as I expected to find it, superior in its decoration to that of the Emerald Buddha, which is new. A family with several children, male and female, have the charge of these temples, and run about merrily and harmlessly all over the inclosure. A great alligator lives in a pond among the rockwork of the temple-garden, but he did not show himself to us, though we enticed him with soft words.

From here we walked by way of the ever picturesque city walls to our usual landing-place, intending to signal to the yacht for a boat to ferry us across to the Wat Chang. We saw the steam-launch actually going our way, but our signals failed to hail her, and Mr. Swinn pushed off in a Siamese boat and asked for the dinghy to be sent for me. He did not like me to go in one of the Siamese cockle-shells, not because it was risking a ducking, but because he considered it *infra dig.*

We crossed the river, broad here at the bend, to Wat Chang, the most recently built of the larger temples in Bangkok. Of fine and imposing aspect as viewed from a distance, this huge, effective, daring, and absurd pagoda is perhaps the drollest piece of architectural decoration ever evolved from

human brain. It is stuck all over with shells and pottery-ware like a grotto built by children on the 1st of August. This the 'Best Crockery temple' is the culmination of the fancy that decorates our interior walls with dinner-plates and cups and saucers. Mrs. Leonowens, governess to the present king of Siam and his brothers, tells in one of her books the true love-tale of a lovely artless girl who was employed in pounding pottery with a club for Wat Chang when her lover first saw her. Among the shells arranged in patterns of stars are broken bits of green, red, and yellow earthenware, and rows of blue saucers, many of them broken, and series of smaller saucers in yellow ware, and dinner-plates of many colours all carefully broken in five or six pieces to represent petals of great flowers.  The distant effect is good in its way, and quaint to the last degree. It is the apotheosis of *bric-à-brac*. The entrance to the principal wat appertaining to this giant pagoda is guarded by a row of lions, and two monster figures of armed warders holding clubs. The heads of these huge demon-like guards reach above the tiled roof of the peristyle nearly to the high-pitched central gables of the wat. The four pagodas at the angles are all alike, and are merely simplified reductions of the great central pagoda. The temple is agreeably situated in a grove of tall trees with turf and paved walks.

Towards evening a large party of us went in three carriages to Wat Sakhèt, the temple and cremation-ground of the common people. This was a duty we had postponed to this our last day on account of its unpleasant nature.

Sir John Bowring in his 'Siam' says: 'If the deceased have ordered that his body shall be delivered to vultures and crows, the functionary cuts it up and distributes it to the birds of prey which are always assembled. I have heard Parsees regret in China that they lose the privilege of having their remains carried by winged messengers to all quarters of Heaven.' This poetical idea is fallacious, at least as regards Bangkok, for the vultures remain wedded to their position on the pinnacles of the Wat Sakhèt. Mrs. Leonowens, a good authority in respect of her long residence at the Siamese Court and her knowledge of the language, says the rite of burning the body after death is held in great veneration by the Siamese Buddhists, as they believe that, by this process, its material parts are restored to the higher elements; whereas burial, or the abandonment of the body to dogs and vultures, signifies that the body must then return to the earth and pass through countless forms of the lower orders of creation before it can again be fitted for the occupation of a human soul.

This is evolution with a vengeance. Extremes meet. We boast of our advancement and are beginning to talk of evolution and cremation; the Siamese made up their minds about these subjects ages ago.

Mr. Cobham went to the chamber of horrors where the bodies are cut up for the vultures. The functionaries were at work, and he counted eighty birds waiting for the ghastly feast. It was enough for me to see at different times Mr. Swan as well as Mr. Cobham come back from this spectacle looking pale and ill.

We went to the large sheds, at this time empty, where the better classes of Siamese are cremated. The lowest cost of the ceremonial is ten shillings. The bodies of those whose families cannot afford this sum, five ticals, are distributed to the crows and vultures.

Two tall, slender obelisks are erected near the Wat Sakhèt in memory of the pure lovers, Bâlât, the priest, and Tuptim, 'the pomegranate,'—who suffered death and torture in the last reign for their faith to each other. The inscription on the obelisks runs thus: 'Suns may set and rise again, but the pure and brave Bâlât and Tuptim will never more return to this earth.'

Mrs. Leonowens, the governess at the Court, says she knew the girl, and had taught her to read and write English.

STORY OF BALAT AND TUPTIM.

The outline of the tale runs thus: The fair and artless Tuptim, not yet sixteen, was pounding pottery for the decoration of Wat Chang, when, perceiving she attracted the notice of the king, she sank down and hid her face among the vases and fragments of earthenware. The king did no more just then than inquire her name and parentage. Later she was sent for to the palace and was given a betel-box made like a pomegranate (after her name Tuptim) of gold inlaid with rubies, that shut and opened with a spring. But still she hid herself from the king, as she was in love and had been betrothed to a priest called Bâlât. One day she was lost altogether, escaping the Amazons on guard at the

harem. She escaped in the dress of a young priest to the temple where Bâlât was serving, having shaved her hair and eyebrows so that her lover did not know her. She was discovered and brought to trial before the women-judges, her feet and hands heavily fettered. But the child's voice was firm and unflinching.

The priest lover was recognised from his name written in English concealed in her girdle, and he was taken and condemned to torture. Tuptim pleaded for him that she alone was guilty, that he knew nothing of her escape, that he did not even know her.

On Mrs. Leonowens interceding for her with the king, Tuptim was reprieved from death and condemned to work in the rice-mill, but he again changed his mind and had them both executed; she declaring to the last, 'All the guilt was mine, I knew that I was a woman and he did not.' Bâlât and Tuptim suffered death by fire publicly outside the cemetery and the moat enclosing the Wah Sahkét. One day the king said to Mrs. Leonowens, 'I have much sorrow for Tuptim, for I now believe she was innocent. I had a dream that I saw Tuptim and Bâlât floating together in a great wide space, and she bent down and touched me on the shoulder, saying, "We were pure and guiltless on earth, and look, we are happy now."'

Thence we ascended the easy, though somewhat ruinous, stairs of brick and stone, winding up outside the old and picturesque tower close by, that commands a view of the whole of Bangkok set in its greenery. The Menam is invisible, or nearly

so, for the roofs of its bordering houses, but the broader canals, with their fragile fairy bridges, make a pleasing feature in the centre of the soft, strange landscape fading off in distance, its crowded details imperceptibly melting into the ocean-like blue of the richly-wooded level country. From this tower you seem to be midway in the air, looking down upon a city of trees. The Premane and its dazzling palaces filled up one quarter of the view from aloft. To-morrow their place will be empty; to-morrow also Bangkok will know us no more. The sun was setting red over the softly purpling grey distances, lights were beginning to glimmer in the dense groves of plantain and palm, as we sat long on the weed-grown wall of the tower, gathering the calotropis* and many tufted flowers of sorts we never knew before, and shall most likely never see again. The satisfied vultures had wheeled aloft, and returned to their dismal eyrie on the Towers of Death. Here, in this solemn evening hour, we, too, though not akin to these hospitable dusky people in race or thought, felt we could join in the Buddhist evening hymn :

‘O Thou, who art Thyself the light,
Boundless in knowledge, beautiful as day,
Irradiate my heart, my life, my sight,
Nor ever let me from Thy presence stray !’

We wound up with a drive round the now nearly dismantled Premane. It was difficult to believe that this scene of wreck, the skeleton of festivities, was the once dazzling temple and garden of wildest, strangest, and most extravagant pleasure.

* Note B, Appendix.

The Siamese bandsmen, who had not removed their quaint but charming instruments, came again this evening to give us a concert of farewell. They struck up their wild rivers of melody as we came into the great vestibule, dressed for dinner, and then carried their instruments into the galleries of the inner court of the palace, to play to us also during dinner. We and our numerous Siamese visitors made quite a festival of this parting banquet. They placed on the table bowls of the long lemon-leaved green flowers, which, in their language of flowers, mean tears of absence; we also wore the sweet, night-scented blossoms and lemon-like leaves. The musicians echoed our sentiment, as they played a north-country air of Lao, the birth-place of many of them; for the Laosians are really the most musical of the Siamese race. The band played a love-song of their Lao land with a vocal obligato accompaniment between the verses; reversing our way of singing the verses and playing the symphony, they play the tune, and sing the symphonies. The voice—though they were very proud of their singer—was too much of a cat-howl to be musical; but the music itself is wild, melodious, and very pleasing. The 'Lament of the Heart'—which they played especially for us—is a favourite Laosian air. Perhaps still more pleasing to me was the 'Dream of a Day in Paradise'; its rippling and rustling sounds recalled the soft green forests of Ayuthia watered by its four rivers.

'Gone are they, but I have them in my soul.'

'The music of the Siamese Peguans and Laos

differs from that of most Indian nations in being played upon different keys, a feature which characterises the pathetic music of certain Europeans, and in particular the Scottish and Welsh nations.*

When they played the 'Sailors' Hornpipe,' in compliment to the Duke as a yachtsman, we all tapped an obligato accompaniment with the hafts of our knives, and sang 'Jack Robinson!' All English are mad, doubtless thought the silent, blandly-smiling, heathen Chinees, as they waited at table, puzzled by the unusual frenzy—and at our laughter, as the band gave, with great spirit, the grand chain-figure of the original 'Lanceers.'

We had a rival band, for Aleck played the pipes; and then it transpired that one of the bandsmen knew how to play the pipes too; so Aleck let him try, and we shouted with laughter, as we saw the Siamese piper walking up and down the gallery outside, imitating Aleck's Highland swagger to the life, and the playing itself was not half bad for an unaccustomed hand.

There is apparently no more difference between the *Lao* pipes and those Aleck uses than there is between the Highland and the Northumbrian pipes. The Greeks and Romans we know from sculpture had bag-pipes precisely like those of the Highlanders. Very probably the instrument descended south-eastward as well as north-westward, from a common hill-centre in Asia's highlands, a watershed of music. The Siamese are proud of their descent from certain hill-tribes of Thibet, called

* Leonowens.

the 'Free.' Mr. Clerevaux Fenwick, in his remarks on 'Bag-pipes and Pipe-music,' disputes Pennant's view of the pipes having been introduced into Britain by the Romans, by the fact of the use of these instruments having been almost exclusively confined to the northern part of our island. 'One of the Canterbury pilgrims was a bag-piper. The use of the bag-pipes, however, in the south of England is, and appears always to have been, extremely rare.'

Pickering thinks the Siamese are of Malay origin—most Europeans regard them as mainly Mongolian. Mrs. Leonowens thinks more probably they belong to the Indo-European family. According to the researches of the late King of Siam, out of twelve thousand eight hundred Siamese words more than five thousand were found to be Sanskrit, or to have their roots in that language. There is great family likeness between the Siamese and the photographs of the Thibet and Sikkim people in the India Museum. They are not at all like the Bhotans, or other upper Indian tribes. I took one of the Thibetan photographs for a portrait of our chamberlain. The royal family are not so much like the Thibetan type, and they are small-made—but then, something like our own royal family, the kings are always obliged to marry their cousins.

The Siamese language has a soft musical sound like Italian, but they find little difficulty in learning our harsher English, as it has far greater similarities of pronunciation with Siamese than has either French or German.

The Siamese hymn and 'Rule Britannia' were played, and 'God Save the Queen,' all standing, concluded the concert. The Duke is Conservative and very loyal.

For a Palace of Calm Delights they gave us a pretty fair orgy.

The chamberlain, Phya Bamreubhakdi, regrets that the fortnight's ceremonies have prevented his giving the Duke a great entertainment; but it is not the custom to give feasts during the festivities of the cremation. After exchanges of cards and invitations to visit in England and Siam, we gathered all our small luggage to take down with us in numerous carriages and boats to the yacht, which had been sent by daylight some distance down the river to avoid the difficulty of steering by night through the maze of shipping in the Menam. We were accompanied to the *Sans Peur* by the chamberlain and his son, Prince Doctor, Mr. Michell, and Mr. Solomon, the inspector of police, as well as some other English gentlemen. In the moonlight row down the river, the fantastic spires gleaming bright upon us, forgetting the earthy flavours of Bangkok, we sentimentalised as we felt its balmy air for the last time. 'Ta, ta, by-bye,' we called as we passed Sir Andrew Clarke's yacht, where it seemed they had all gone to bed. We got on board about eleven o'clock, and soon Sir Andrew with a party of gentlemen came alongside in a steam-launch and came on board for farewell.

Siam is different from anything else in the world. Providence has placed two large seas between us

and those far eastern countries ; they can never become hackneyed to us. Much of their art workmanship and general civilization has filtered to them from the west through China. Siam's customs have so altered since Bowring's book was published in 1857 that this work seems almost to treat of another country. When my husband was in Siam also thirty years ago he made copious notes of the condition of the people and aspect of the country. From his MS. journal, which I carried with me, I was able to see in how many ways the Siamese had made progress under their present king, and to judge whether the advance is solid or frothy. As regards those outward signs of advancement : telegraphs, electric lighting, cheap postage, newspapers, &c., they are not so very far behind us, after all ; for it is only in the present reign that we have had these advantages ourselves. It is true the foreign post from Bangkok is as yet casual : Mr. Michell used to say of our letters, 'Oh, put them in, post them, I daresay they'll go.'

The *Bangkok Times*, now deep in its third volume, is a bi-weekly institution. The Siam Directory, one might say, has taken a leaf out of our society papers when it chronicles in its notable events as a notable day, that on which Lady Robinson held a reception in 1878.

Thirty years, and indeed thirty months, ago there was no hotel in Bangkok ; thirty years since there was not a single hospital in this city of half-a-million of souls for the reception of patients native or European : though at that date they practised vac-

cination, even in the remoter parts of the country. Now there is more than one good hospital.

Amongst the Europeans located on shore the most fatal disease is dysentery; it is usually intractable unless change of air is resorted to. Smallpox used to be one of the most fatal diseases with natives: vaccination is now deemed protective. The natives suffer much from asthma, even the little children; but Europeans are not similarly afflicted. Siamese of all ages smoke tobacco and chew betelnut; this latter habit causes the gums to recede and the teeth to drop out, usually between forty and fifty years of age. Toothache is rare, and the extraction of one by the forceps or key is an event in a family. In Siam there are many Europeans of long residence in good health, and the natives frequently attain a good old age. Ulcers are treated by the native empirics with a sort of chalk plaster; but they do not appear to be so frequent as with the Burmese, nor do ulcers afflict horses as in Burmah. Intermittent fevers are easily treated in Europeans, but the natives suffer much. The jungle or bilious remittent fever is sometimes fatal to Europeans, terminating in coma, but no black vomit. Where there is a phthisical tendency, the climate is said to be beneficial; but if the disease is developed it runs its course quickly. At the changes of the monsoons are the most sickly periods. Children after seven days of age die much of lock-jaw; it is supposed to be caused by constipation and the smoke from the perfumed wood-fires to which mother and child are subjected according to Siamese custom.

Rice with fish is the staple diet of the native population, to which they add yams, sweet potatoes, coco-nuts, bananas, and the fruits of the season. In what Gibbon calls 'the gigantic ignorance of the ancients' is pretty much the mental condition of the bulk of the population; though perhaps it is not much greater than ours in relation to them. The upper classes are doing all they can to diminish this ignorance by European education, from which young Siam goes back to benightedness.

Polygamy is the rock royalty in Siam will split upon, and aristocracy too; not only because it is so degrading and so sensual, but because it is expensive to the nation, which finds itself called on to maintain vast families of useless people, to provide them with a costly living, and a still more expensive cremation.

The Siamese have always liked and admired the English, and now, by our acquisition of the whole of Burmah, a troublesome natural enemy to them has been replaced by a friendly power. This is, of course, greatly to their advantage; only their timidity makes them fear that we may some day care to conquer and annex Siam as suddenly as we did Burmah. This if is not our interest to do; the only circumstance of this kind at present conjecturable would be that of our having to prevent France from taking the initiative, and placing a formidable French barrier between India and the far eastern world.

'The anchor's weighed—farewell—remember me,' said Prince Doctor, and waved his Siamese lily-hand.

CHAPTER IX.

RETURN TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Some isle
 With the sea's silence on it—
 Some unsuspected isle in the far seas.

• *Pippa Passes.*

CHAPTER on snakes. There are plenty of snakes in Siam. Not only are the poisonous land-snakes very numerous, but Captain Chune, a native officer of the Siamese Royal Navy, gave my husband such a list of the poisonous water-snakes and fishes as to make it appear as risky for a ship's company to go fishing as for them to bathe without the protection of a sail in waters abounding in sharks. The black snake, which was yesterday seen on the surface of the water, is called by the Siamese Ochitung; the *O* signifies a snake, and *chi-tung* means the tail of a pendant. The length of this black snake is about one foot. Its bite is very poisonous, and the Siamese treatment of the wound is a matter of the most secret empiricism. It is generally fatal in eight hours, and the patient seldom survives beyond a day.

Another snake seen in these waters is between

two and three feet long, of a white colour with black spots. Its movements are slow in the water. The Siamese name for it is *O-sanim-lung*, *O* meaning snake, *sanim-lung* is like coral, for the creature, in juxtaposition to the coral reef, is not easily distinguishable. The bite of this snake is very poisonous, and it appears to kill by coma within six hours, no reaction at any time exhibiting itself from the period of the bite to that of dissolution. These snakes are in great plenty at the mouth of Siamese rivers, or most numerous where the salt and fresh waters meet.

Another species of snake is found in the fresh waters of Siam, called *Opra* (expressing fish-snake), or *O-wung-chang*, a name derived from their likeness to an elephant's trunk. Their movements are slow, and, excepting being white under the belly, are the colour of the elephant's proboscis. Their bite is poisonous, but not deadly. The Siamese treat it with a poultice made of pounded wild garlic.

There is a poisonous fish named in Siamese *O-how-pra-shon*. *O-how* means a poisonous snake, and *pra-shon* is the name of a fish which it resembles, which is of good quality, and extensively salted in Siam for exportation. This poisonous fish is not easily recognised amongst others. Its movements are slow; its bite causes instant insensibility. One Siamese, bitten in the trunk, died in an hour; another, bitten in the ankle, died in two hours. It is of great consequence to the Siamese, an amphibious people, to know the habits of these creatures infesting their waters, in order to avoid their haunts.

Even the youngest children are skilful in the management of their light boats, and infants learn to swim before they are well out of their mothers' arms.

Steamers drawing but little water take the short cut through a small channel named Mung-nakawn-keon-kong, which cuts off a long bend in the river to within five hundred yards of Paklat. This passage is about twenty-five yards wide, and the vessels kiss the bushes in the intricate navigation. Ships' boats must here use paddles, as is the native custom; the oars take too much room. The bamboo houses are built on piles, as elsewhere, though the clayey banks of the stream are somewhat high. The house of the governor of the district is passed on the left going down. This is substantially built of wood on huge piles of teak; some neat carving decorates the windows, the roof is covered with red tiles. The channel is crossed by two wooden bridges, the centre-piece shifting to allow the steamers' funnels to pass through. There are some pretty wats also on the left bank, whose white pagodas and minor buildings display much symmetry and beauty. Among the bamboos and palm-trees, the bread-fruit, and dark polished bushy foliage of the mangosteen, are numerous stacks of sappan-wood *Caesalpinia sappan*; many pheasants and rooks in coveys are seen in this district, although it is highly populous, abounding in children in prodigious numbers—Buddhist children do not throw stones at birds.

Back to Paknam again; this place used to be called the sanatorium of Bangkok, but now the king

and the great people go to Chantabon and other sea-side places lower down the Gulf of Siam. We met with a smooth sea after passing the bar, and found it pleasanter sailing down in sight of the chain of islands, named Kohsichand, than the way we came in by the stake-nets in the entrance to the rivers Menam and Mekong.

It was a lazy time for all of us, and we were glad of the repose. Mr. Swan came up, looking like a plaster cast, in a suit of spotless white, with old silver ticals for buttons. He flung himself down on the deck in the attitude of the Dying Gladiator. He calls himself a whitened sepulchre.

‘How can the life of the party be a sepulchre?’ Mr. Cobham asks.

We call him the ‘White Swan.’ Mr. Swan lives up to his name, and is always doing things gracefully. He was just now lamenting the difficulty of getting away gracefully from parties in Singapore: ‘if your gharrie-driver has gone to sleep, and has to be roused with a stick.’

The globe lapsed lazily by us. In the sky was a curious effect of blue and white rays from the sinking sun, like a wheel with spokes of solid white on the blue atmosphere, both colours extending nearly to the disk. We saw this atmospheric phenomenon once, on a later occasion, but less distinctly. In the sea what I thought were current lines—like we see on the Devonshire coast—look, as we pass through them, just like mud, mixed with dark-brown scraps, seemingly of seaweed. The sailors, by the mouth of the ‘bos’un,’

say that it is spawn. The voyage down to Singapore was a four days' rest from moonlight to moonlight. Delicious dreamy days! The sailors, jolly at the thought of going home to sweethearts, wives, and children, sing songs on the after-deck of an evening. We hear now 'Among the flowers and roses with Emalce I roamed.' Then comes the description of her person: 'Her fairy teeth and golden 'air; her eyes were like the little stars.' This elegant female 'came out of Yorkshire; her name is Emalee.' I, too, was happy in the idea of returning to my family.

On the third day, we had scenery of unsuspected islands in the China Sea, one of them rugged, lofty, wooded, and of respectable size; but all beautiful, as touched by the pearly hues of sunset, as we 'see ebb the crimson wave that drifts the sun away.' The Siamese represent these islanders as harmless, though usually armed with krises, spears, and pistols on approaching a stranger! Bullocks and turtles are abundant on these islands, which are densely jungle-clothed. It was the Siamese ambassadors returning to Bangkok, on board H.M.S. *Pylades*, in 1858, who gave this information to my husband; for our people on the *Sans Peur* knew nothing about these islands.

A good run of two hundred and sixty-two miles on the fourth day brought us, at lunch-time, in sight of a zebra-striped lighthouse, and countless islets, bluest of the blue—a zone of sapphires. There are any number of passages among that reef of islands, which looks, as we approach them, like one long coast, as they stretch down right away

to Borneo. Pretty scenery, and a great pagoda of a ship, with royals set, five tiers of sails, all white, looking so different from the vessels we have been lately seeing. We anchored about five p.m. at Singapore.

We are come in the nick of time, as there is to be a sham-fight this evening between the squadron and the fort. We are in a good position for seeing it. How English the whole place looks after Siam! the Indian and Malay boats count for nothing now. Officials approach.

'This is, indeed, a great moment,' says the Duke, as the Prime Minister of the Sultan of Johore is announced, looking for all the world like a neat English groom.

He brought a letter and a message. The Sultan is in Singapore, and hopes soon to hear that his Grace is able to come to Johore.

Does he include the ladies in his invitation?

'Oh! yes, indeed, His Highness's heart will be full of pleasure, if the ladies will favour him by a visit.'

'Is there a Sultana?' we ask of Mr. Swan.

'Just now he has only three wives.' (Ah! that 'just now.') 'But he is building a new harem—a fine place.'

'That's hopeful.'

That hopeful might bear several interpretations.

We turn the palpitating subject.

Firing has begun; there is also a large jungle-fire in the distance, like a crimson sunset, which more than divides our attention with the cannon-

ade and the flashes, the lilac-tinted electric-light, and the manœuvres, which are veiled in mystery and coloured smoke. 'Mystery of mysteries, faintly flashing Heroine,' we remark, as H.M.S. *Heroine* puts her boats in motion for the purpose of—what? Never of capturing the *Sans Peur*! She seems 'going for' us. No; the boarding-boats are lost in the dim distance of smoke.

A semi-circle of lights marks the town of Singapore; on the darker semi-circle of the horizon are the squadron of eleven ships-of-war, and the forts with the electric-light playing all round in blinding rays, and the red moon above the dying jungle-fire.

We learnt more of the meaning of the manœuvres later, and this is what was represented before us in a grand set-piece of nautical theatricals.

A SHAM NIGHT-ATTACK ON SINGAPORE HARBOUR;
A NAVAL ROMANCE.

The naval attack was made by five vessels of the China Squadron on the eastern entrance to the New Harbour, with the object of testing the efficiency of the defences which have been constructed at that point, and also that of the submarine mines which were supposed to have been laid.

The defence was entrusted to the Royal Artillery, with a battery of quick-firing guns, the Royal Engineers, about four companies of the 2nd Battalion South Lancashire Regiment, and six steam-launches acting as guard-boats. The whole of the details in connection with the operations had previously been carefully arranged by the naval and

military authorities in conjunction, under a general Idea which gives a hard pull on one's imagination. The *Orion* ironclad has been worsted in an engagement with a hostile squadron outside, and has taken refuge in New Harbour disabled ; the squadron engages the guns of the harbour defensive works and attempts to force the eastern entrance to the harbour. The *Orion* is to be considered disabled,—we, knowing the great ironclad, and having seen her monster guns when we were at the ball on board on our previous visit to Singapore, found it difficult to realise this part of the Idea ; but it is interesting to know how the gallant ship we had known in festivity is expected or intended to behave herself in adversity. She is so disabled as to be unable to co-operate in the defence beyond sending a few officers and men to assist in working the guard-boats. The western entrance to the harbour is supposed to be blocked. The infantry garrisons at Forts Blakan-Mati and Serapong will be supposed to consist of one company each.

This is the programme ; now for the action. Fort Teregah, fired the first shot at 6.21½, p.m., at the *Audacious*, which was then supposed to be (and perhaps really was) at two thousand, five hundred yards distance. Fort Palmer's guns next made themselves heard, fire being opened from them at 6.22. This fort engaged the *Constance*. Fort Blakan-Mati at 6.24 engaged the *Heroine*, and from this time the firing from the three forts was pretty regular. The *Constance* replied to Fort Palmer at 6.26. About this time, though it had become rather

dark, it was observed that the *Heroine* was lowering her boats, presumably for the purpose of attempting to countermine the entrance. We should not have guessed this without being told; indeed, we thought we should have to use our boarding-pikes in the stand below to repel boarders.

At 6.27 the *Alacrity* brought her machine guns into action, engaging the quick-firing guns at Malay Spit; her fire was returned at 6.28½. The *Audacious*, at 6.43, opened fire with her machine-guns from her tops, engaging the quick-firing guns at Berala.

About this time, and almost simultaneously, the electric light was shown from Fort Teregah and the *Heroine*; the latter playing it on Blakan-Mati, and the former sweeping the channel to prevent the squadron's boats creeping in unobserved. The light from Teregah was now brought to bear on the *Audacious*, and she could be seen most distinctly. Advantage was taken of this to send a few shots at her. The *Alacrity* now brought her powerful light into use, and throwing the beam on Fort Palmer, after having carefully scanned the *Sans Peur*, she kept it fixed on the fort during nearly the whole of the remaining operations. They were supposed to be in considerable dread of the *Sans Peur*, as a strong privateer, not knowing which side she would be likely to take in the action. The spectacle now afforded was really magnificent: the various forts engaging the different vessels with both machine and heavy guns, the forts replying, the electric light playing from the numerous ships and Fort Teregah; the guard-boats steaming about at the entrance like

sharks eager for their prey—all went to make up a sight such as Singapore has never before witnessed; such indeed as has never before been seen in any other port in the East—so I am told, and I believe it.

In imagination I was already preparing lint for the wounded.

About seven p.m., the firing was very heavy when a message was received by the commandant at Teregah from the guard-boats, 'Enemy lowering boats.' The engagement now altered its character and became a boat-duel. The attacking boats continued to advance down the channel, being hotly engaged with the flotilla of guard-boats, well handled by Lieutenant Shuckburgh—the guard-boats darting in amongst the others in an extremely plucky manner: the progress of the boats could be noted from the track of smoke emitted from the musketry fire. It was one of the prettiest sights of the evening to see the boats creeping along in darkness, when suddenly the whole would be illuminated by the beam of the electric light being thrown upon them. It was noticeable that the different vessels and boats showed up most distinctly, their white colour being apparently unsuitable for night operations. At 8.30 the admiral sent up from the flagship the preconcerted signal, viz., three rockets and a blue light, that the operations were concluded.

It was a fine thing for us to be in the midst of it all, enjoying the glory of war without its horrors; the cries of the wounded only were missing, and these we were able to imagine as easily as the rest of the romantic suppositions, especially when Dark

Charlie began to satisfy his soul by entering on the practice of a wheezy cornopean which has recently been discovered in the dark torture-chambers of the hold.

While the inevitable coaling was going on, we went to the Raffles Hotel to lunch and read the papers, and learn what the world had been doing during our sojourn in the obscurity of Siam. We read just enough to keep abreast of the world, and then went off to do our shopping; passing with more interest than before the image of an elephant, erected in memory of the King of Siam's visit; the first time a Siamese monarch had ever left his own dominions. King Chulalokorn went also to Ceylon and Calcutta, and all the chief sacred places of India.

The large town of Singapore appears so flourishing and enlightened, so advanced and well-governed, that, after seeing the quaint and crowded city of Bangkok, we feel as if we had come out of the theatre into the plain light of day. Bangkok seems to belong completely to another world, where other ideas reign exclusively, where buildings and processions are of showy trumpery instead of being solid or of good quality, and yet are in the highest degree fascinating; a city made to live in water-colours, not warranted otherwise to last. We were glad to get away from the heavy atmosphere of Siam, which is all one pot-pourri, into the fresher air of Singapore; but we were glad to have seen Bangkok all the same. It feels cooler here, though we are four days' sail nearer the equator, and though the thermometer stands at 85° in the coolest part of the

day. After some shopping we took gharries, small hearse-like cabs with jalousies, for the long drive to the Peninsular and Oriental wharf, where the *Sans Peur*, well scrubbed and scoured after the coaling, had now been moved out into mid-stream of the channel between the green island shores, a pleasant situation for a rest, as we were to stay here all Sunday and proceed on Monday morning to Johore.

The deck-house table was strewn with cards, fresh newspapers and letters, and a large basket of flowers for the ladies, with no card attached.

‘How does one thank unknown benefactors?’ asks the Duke. ‘We shall have a serenade under our ports to-night.’

‘Ice, Charlie, look sharp, my boy,’ says our stout steward to the darkie lad, and iced cider and seltzer-water appear as foaming cup.

The boat-loads of shells came round the yacht again. These look so beautiful all wetted and in the sunshine. Rose, the boatswain, bargained with the black men very cleverly for us, and we brought on board an immense quantity of lovely shells. The Duke was for buying a boat-load as it stood, but we preferred selecting from all the boats, which caused a great and amusing excitement, and much pantomimic imploring among the black fellows, as Rose laid down the law to them, and perhaps, after all, only overpaid them three times over. We were mutually pleased with our bargains. The greatest trouble was in washing and packing the fragile shells after we had admired them sufficiently.

We are lying in a pleasant strait of blue sea, bordered by foliaged islands, with shipping beyond and round the headland. This anchorage is more like a reach of the rivers at Dartmouth or Falmouth than an eastern place. Truly this is another world from Bangkok ; such sweet and quiet rest for Sunday, shaded by the double awnings, hearing no sounds but the murmur of the water, a distant cock crowing at intervals, and the hum of voices in boats paddling past. A black boatman alongside in Sunday best of a blue shirt and grass-green mushroom hat with white half-moons round the brim, his boat picked out with bright green and blue to match his garments, is waiting about to see if the officers or men have occasion for his services.

Thunder is rolling round us, and a shower while the sun is shining makes the grass and foliage look doubly green. It rains hot water here.

I went to the cathedral service in Singapore. The church is very neat and nice inside, if you can call that inside which is open like a cloister on both sides. In the evening it is lighted with gas, lit too early, or rather turned up high too early, otherwise every precaution is taken to ensure coolness ; the church besides being shaded by trees, is open all round, and has open cane seats set in dark wood. The sight of the thirty-two punkahs tugged by different strings by thirty-two Moormen, waving out of time in all directions towards nave and transept, and not at the same level, has a most bewildering effect. It makes some people feel sea-sick. The punkahs should be moved by one string as they are in large halls. The music is

soft and sweet, and for the most part congregational, though there is a surpliced choir.

Major Grey, governor of the prison here, dined with us, and from him we learnt how much better and more humane our prison arrangements are than those of the Chinese or Siamese. His great aim is to lead the prisoners to a better life, and carefully to distinguish between hardened criminals and those capable of returning to be of use to society. Our government does not recognise the debt slavery often incurred through gambling. Gambling altogether has been prohibited in Singapore. Perhaps this is one reason why the Chinese look so flourishing and happy here.

‘This is so good for the Sultan of Johore,’ said Mr. Swan, slyly. ‘He can finish the steam train-line and bring over a thousand Chinese a day to gamble in his territory.’

CHAPTER X.

THE SULTAN OF JOHORE.

Emeralds ! The colour, Fanny, of the light . . .
 Sifted through lime leaves, on a summer noon,
 Or curl of crested wave, when foam-bells bright
 Tingó the green furrows of the sea, in June.

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD.

' HAS his Grace a Johore flag for the Sultan ?' asks Mr. Swan of Mr. Butters. Mr. Swan is an authority in right of some years' residence in these parts.

' No, he hasn't got a flag, has he ?'

' Oh, very much a flag, a blue crescent and star on a red ground.'

I offered to paint an Egyptian star and crescent blue for the purpose.

' Suppose we call it somebody's birthday and dress the ship with all her flags ?' proposed the Duke. ' Who will have a birthday ? Perhaps he'll make you a present.'

Omnes : ' We'll all keep our birthdays.'

This was settled. Fourth of March the universal birthday. . .

Now we are off to Johore ; we expect to stay two days with the Sultan. We pass up the

eastern passage from the island of Singapore to the mainland of the Malayan peninsula, the southern portion of which is the territory of Johore. The mangrove-grown shores are broken by pretty little Malay villages on stilts peeping out from among the greenery.

We reach Johore, with the Malay village of Kranjie on the opposite side of the straits, soon after five p.m. 'Midships!' and the anchor drops.

'That's the old railway-station,' says Mr. Swan, our cicerone in these Malayan regions.

'Was there ever a railway here?'

'Yes, but it was eaten up by the white ants. They ran the engine on till it came to a place where there were a good many of these ants; the engine fell into the hole, and they left it there. That was the trial trip, and they were timber sleepers.'

We were about to see another phase of Oriental life. The gay little town of Johore Bharu, a Malay town, with an admixture of ten thousand Chinese, centralised by a market-place of architectural pretensions, with a sea-side portico built for the reception of the young Princes of Wales, was festive with flags, and the shipping of small craft in the straits was all gaily dressed with the Johore flag, dark-blue with a red quarter charged with a white crescent and star—but the precise colour does not seem to signify greatly, so that it has the crescent and star, and dark blue somewhere.

The belt of sea looks like a river, or, rather, like a narrow lake, so blue and smooth. They say it can be rough sometimes. The Sultan's house near

the sea appears a comfortable country-seat. Its gardens slope down to the water's edge. It is set in palm-trees and the beautiful ash-leaved tree, *poinciana regia*, known as *flamboyante*, or flame of the forest, with scarlet flame-like blossoms, and other trees, some with what we should call autumn-tints in Europe. The leaves do fall, even in the tropics, though imperceptibly, so that but few trees are bare at a time. Dato Sri Amar d'Raja, the Sultan's private secretary, a highly intelligent young man in European dress, and speaking English fluently, came with another Malay gentleman on board the *Sans Peur* to meet us. The latter gentleman wore the checked silk or cotton skirt, like a duster, round his waist, that is the national sarong.

The Sultan, a stout, pleasant-looking man of middle age, with olive complexion, wearing drab clothes and gold bracelets, received us at the head of the garden stairs of the palace and offered us tea, which was spread on a large round table in the entrance. The view of both shores of the straits from this portico was truly charming.

We were shown our rooms: the Duke and we ladies had each a pleasant suite of rooms apportioned us, with bed-room, dressing-room, ante-room, and drawing-room facing the sea, where we could see the *Sans Peur* behind the palm-trees, and a bath-room below each suite, approached by a winding stair from the dressing-room. Instead of doors there are screens raised eight inches from the ground, fastened at the top, at about six feet from the floor, with a sliding piece of carved wood. This

arrangement, only less ornamental, is the custom at Singapore. There are no locks or bolts; it is understood that no one opens a door whose sliding-panel is drawn across. Animals can run in under, but only a very tall man can look over.

The Istana, as it is always called, the Malay word for palace, is European, that is Anglo-Indian in build; in style Renaissance. It was built entirely by Chinese workmen under a European architect. It is internally handsome and well-furnished; the halls and rooms very large and lofty, and the marble staircase broad and fine. The saloon and ball-room on the first floor are hung with rich damask draperies and large portraits of our royal family, and lined with tall Japanese vases, brought home by the Sultan from Japan, with other handsome Chinese and Japanese ornaments; the other furniture, sofas, ottomans, &c., all European. The staircase and saloon have many tall trumpet glasses, eight feet high, full of tall fronds, or rather boughs, of the delicate *phœnix rupicola* variety of the date-palm, the glasses twined with climbing fern; this makes a most elegant and striking decoration, giving an appearance as of a grove of palm-trees with their gracefully waving plumes reared high above our heads, though not nearly reaching the lofty ceiling. The floral decorations all over the house are worthy of the tropics, besides the ferns so bright and green, the various crotons and begonias so rich and dark and velvety, and all so tropically luxuriant as scarcely to be imagined by a Londoner.

As we met each other in a large verandah-like

room, common to all of us, between our private apartiments, we said, 'We shall enjoy this place thoroughly ;' and we all secretly wished our stay might be longer than the two days we had at first almost unwillingly spared.

The Sultan appeared elegantly dressed for dinner, in a monkey-jacket, with the order of the Star of India, and a black velvet fez, with an aigrette of large diamonds in the front; half-a-dozen large gipsy-rings on each hand, almost covering his dark, fat little fingers; the rings all rubies and diamonds on one hand, all emeralds and diamonds on the other. The secretary, Sri Amar d'Raja, was dressed in real English fashion; the other Malay gentlemen wore black coats and trousers, and coloured check sarongs. These Malays were less akin to Europeans in feature than the Siamese, but I cannot see that the Malays are a distinct race from all others; I trace Mongolian features in every line.

I was taken down to dinner by the Sultan, and found him agreeable to talk to. His English is good, though less perfect than that of some of his suite. The very long dining-room is cooled by a line of punkahs, and by open corridors on each side, lined with ferns and other plants. The Sultan bought in London the famous gold dinner-service made for Lord Ellenborough when Governor-General of India, and never sent out. A portion of this was used to decorate the Sultan's table. The large wine-coolers, filled with flowers, are heavy, but the smaller pieces of this service, in Neo-Pompeian style, are very elegant.

After dinner, we had a number of the Sultan's carriages and gharries, and drove through the busy, stall-crowded streets of the town to the Chinese opera, where we sat in a kind of state barn, at some distance, luckily, from the singers, who acted on a raised stage, with a proscenium or frame round it, and simple, fixed scenery. There was a promenade parterre between us and them. The spectators stared at us more than at the other spectacle. More than ever was I struck with eastern costumes as being such a mixture of nakedness and jewels.

The play had a good deal of casting up the legs, and twirling, strutting, striding, and stalking, as in our barn or fair-theatres, the nature of actors being the same all the world over. The piece was to us like a pantomime, with processions of first, second, and third heroes, all equally heroic; alternately with four soldiers going round and round as an army. The voices were mostly in falsetto. The best we could say of the singing was, 'It is a beautiful inarticulate row.' The clashing of cymbals, and thumping of serpent skin cylinders and drums was a din, and nothing less. In music, the Chinese and Malays are very, very far behind the Siamese, whose music is heavenly compared with this; indeed, it is very pleasing, and often delightful—a real art, and not a discordant screaming and clashing.

We ladies had a carriage, and went home after the opera; the rest waited to see the fire-works, which I heard were fine, and then they went to the Chinese gambling-house, which, it seems, is the

chief fun here. Johore is considered an Asiatic Monte Carlo.

The second breakfast, or tiffin, is nominally at noon, though, as His Highness is easy-going and unpunctual, and there are excursions to be considered, the hours at the Istana are not fixed as fate. Time is no object here.

The excursion planned for to-day was a four-in-hand drive to Singapore. In the Sultan's launch we crossed the Straits to Kranjie, on the Singapore Island, which island was sold to the English government by the then Maharajah of Johore, passing the *Sus Peur*, dressed rainbow-fashion with all her flags. The white ship is a pretty feature in the landscape as we see her from the palace windows peeping between the palm-trees.

We are often told that no Mohammedan can wear a hat with a brim, or stiff crown, of any kind, which would prevent him bowing his forehead to the earth in worship. Yet the Sultan of Johore wears the pith-helmet, and most of the Malay gentlemen wear billycock hats.

The red-gravelled road is extremely good, as all the roads are round Singapore. The Sultan sat on the box, but did not drive. The fine horses went capitally; the vegetation is beautiful and most interesting, the ferny undergrowths being especially charming; and the drive would have been perfection had not the thermometer stood at 92° in the shade; in the lesser shade of our lined-parasols, it was much higher.

Yes, the tropics are like Bull's hot-houses, only

you cannot get out of them. We sat and cooled ourselves in the verandah of the Raffles Hotel till four o'clock, spelling the same old newspapers; and then, in other carriages, we drove to the Sultan's pretty villa, Tyersall, some two miles out of Singapore, where we had (Liberian) coffee and cream, a luxury in the tropics, and examined His Highness's collection of Chinese and Japanese curios, imported by himself. The Sultana lives at Tyersall. She is no longer young; but the Sultan esteems her highly, and consults her in everything. It is true he has other, younger, wives, but only the Sultana is a power in the state. She possesses also the power of the purse, for 'in Malay marriage contracts it is agreed that all savings and "effects" are to be the property of husband and wife equally, and are to be equally divided in case of divorce.'* It is currently reported that the Sultan has already spent his share, or rather invested it in improvements, jewels, furniture, and splendour; and it is rumoured she gives him an allowance. Any way, they seem an amiable couple. He talks of re-building and enlarging her house at Tyersall.

The fire-flies had come out by the end of our drive back to Kranjie, where we took the steam-launch to return.

The Sultan looks at Singapore as if he were sorry he had sold it, and at times arises a sort of jealousy of us; at once quelled by the remembrance of the advantage to himself, and his hopes for the future in following our example closely.

* Bird.

There was a large dinner-party invited for half-past seven, who all arrived just as we entered the Istana, so we hastened to dress, and we were all ready long before the Sultan, who kept us waiting till half-past eight, while he opened his jewel-case and took out his best black velvet tarboosh, with a still more magnificent aigrette enriched with the Johore star and crescent in brilliants, and three orders—the Star of India, St. Michael and St. George, and the Johore star in diamonds and rubies—on his short, funny little jacket.

The Sultan's wines are excellent and deliciously cooled; the still hock is a dream, but he and all the Mohammedan gentlemen take only water at dinner; just one tumbler is set for them instead of the sheaf of glasses standing by our plates. An American lady once came to give temperance lectures at Johore; the Sultan, who, like all his Moslem subjects, drinks nothing but water or tea, spoke of this with a keen twinkle of amusement. The Sultan generally says, 'What you call' before he can remember the English name for things. He loves to talk of his travels and of his reception, at various times, at 'Marble' (Marlborough) House. I sat on His Highness's left this evening, and next to Dato Meldruni, a Scotch gentleman, a botanist, long resident here, who talked to me about the Johore forests. Aleck played the pipes, walking round the table 'by desire;' the fulness of his tartan kilt being a matter of deep curiosity to the Malay visitors and attendants, who wear their checked sarongs so extremely scanty, not quite two yards and a

quarter round and one yard and a quarter long, though the men shorten it in the wearing by many folds, and the women drape it gracefully in a knot at one side. The meaning of the Malay word sarong is, literally, case or sheath. The Siamese panung, never worn with trousers, is an altogether different arrangement, and very seldom of checked pattern, which the sarong always is, whether of cotton or silk. White or black jacket and trousers, and a sarong is the costume of Malays of the upper class. More of the gold Ellenborough dinner-service was used this evening; the numerous golden candelabra, twined with climbing fern, *Cycopodium japonicum*, and the flower decorations were exquisitely arranged. These are varied at every meal, and always tasteful.

We numbered eight English ladies at dinner this evening, chiefly from Johore and its neighbourhood. On retiring from table, at a signal of numerous rockets from the *Sans Peur*, we all went out in the garden to see the yacht lighted up with white and crimson fires alternately all along the ship, the reflections streaming down on the water in diamond and ruby radiance, the masts and yards illuminated by a sheaf of rockets. It was a charming spectacle as seen among the deeply-shadowed palm-trees.

As we took our coffee in the garden, the Sultan, perceiving us from a distance, gallantly said, 'It is a dream of fair women.' Distance and distraction lent the requisite enchantment to the view.

We adjourned to the billiard-rooms, where they played billiards and pool. I watched the games. The Sultan is a fairly good player. Sentries walk

up and down the corridors here by the billiard-rooms, near which is the Sultan's jewel-room, as they do up and down the lower garden terrace-walk between the Istana and the sea. These soldiers are Sikhs, with white turbans and fierce, rolling eyeballs.

The Sultan insisted on our staying longer at Johore, and we were nothing loth to be pressed to stay with this most hospitable host who did everything to entertain us ; for every day there were excursions and parties, and, but for collapse from the extreme heat, we might have worked all day and night at amusement. One day we took what we called a rest-day, but so many things were crowded into it as an empty day, which could not so well be done on days when excursions were made, that we worked very hard indeed at being idle. Many such idle days as this would be the death of us ; we hastened to crowd on the excursions as an easier fate. The dinners and tiffins were an effort, though we are accustomed to these ; but sometimes we had a Malay breakfast, beginning with a capital mayonnaise of fish and capers, and then a ponderous Malay curry, twenty courses in one, of about twenty-six dishes and 'sambals,' which are grated, shredded, chopped or powdered preparations of seven little dishes in each sambal-tray, of which you are expected to select several or nearly all. There are several sets of sambals. We enjoyed the curry, and made merry over it, counting the different dishes and flavourings we had heaped together on our hot-water plates. The Sultan piled his plate

high as possible with all the twenty-six varieties—and the sambals—enjoyed it, and came for more. Other curries after this will be sorrow's crown of sorrow, making us remember happier things.

A Malay curry comprises in itself a dinner, ay, even a German dinner. As Count Smorltork would say, 'A Malay curry surprises by himself,' &c.

This masterpiece is compounded by the Babu—the Sultan's chef—under the Sultan's own eyes. Like a domesticated Frenchman, Sultan Abubekir likes poking about doing his housekeeping, looking after the 'perfectionatiug' of the sambals. When he comes to England, or goes anywhere on a visit, he can eat nothing that has not been prepared by his own cooks; of course, like all Moslems, he can only eat meat slaughtered by a Mohainmedan butcher.

Then the whole paraphernalia of dishes was handed round again to be eaten with the yellow, glutinous rice, which they made a point of our tasting. This small-grained rice is a special sort. Yellow being the royal colour, it is received as an honour by the guests; but it is really not so good as the ordinary rice. Johore being so close to Singapore is better off for supplies than the rest of the Malay peninsula, where you get only buffalo meat, fresh pork, and fowls.

After the curry, they handed round large dishes of pommelœs, a green fruit here, not at all like what we see in Covent Garden. It had a flavour like the Bangkok perfumery.

I watched the servants rearranging the palm-trees,

as we call the groves of calamus *Lewisianus* (from Penang) in the tall trumpet glasses. They brought sheaves of boughs. What a wealth of beauty! inconceivable by us who prize little pots of this fairy palm about a foot high for our dinner-tables at home. I enjoyed the sight of the picturesque figures of Chinese gardeners carrying their yoked baskets, Punjaubee sentries with fierce eyes that yet look protectingly at us, as if they liked the English rather than otherwise. Malay servants, too, in various costumes were to be seen singly or in groups moving across the pillared halls and corridors among the dark velvet-foliaged plants, bearing masses of flowers for the table in fanciful baskets or on metal trays, the creepers of the verandahs and the more distant palms forming a background to the groups. The dark-blue flag of Johore is to-day flying from the yacht, along with the burgee and the pussy-cat flag.

Aleck is gone off in the victoria to meet and pick up Lady Clare and Mr. Swan who have walked on. Mr. Swan is our sheet-anchor; as he speaks Malay we all try to secure him to go out shopping or driving. Poor Aleck looks so utterly miserable, he is helpless if the Dato Secretary does not tell the driver exactly where to go. He might be left in the jungle with the tigers. Dato is a title almost synonymous with Pasha.

This afternoon, about four o'clock, the Sultan, the Duke, Mr. Cobham, and I set off in the Sultan's steam-launch up the Scudai river, really an arm of the sea, to see the brick-and-tile works. I am re-

minded of Dartmoor by the distant hill-scenery beyond the jungle which stretches for miles behind the mangroves, whose timber, such as it is, is good for fuel. Nearly the whole of the interior of Johore is dense virgin forests. Dato Meldrum tells me the magnitude and grandeur of these forests, viewed from the summit of the blue mountain yonder, called Gunong Pulai, about twelve miles from Johore Baru, fills the mind with a feeling of something akin to awe. There is a bed of stiff red clay here being worked for bricks by Messrs. Fraser and Fowke, who live here in a rough bachelor bungalow, and employ many Klings, Chinese, Javanese, and others. There is likewise a marl of very fine quality. The Sultan, who is always on the look-out for what will improve his property, pricked up his ears at my suggestion that it might possibly be fuller's-earth.

The Chinese employed here are immensely powerful men. The Chinese complexion varies very much; in some persons it is yellow, these are chiefly the townspeople and those who live indoors; in these men at the brick-works it is often quite red, like the North-American Indians. The Javanese are an industrious race, much more so than the Malays, who will not work continuously at anything, preferring to be idle altogether. They do not so much object to work as coachmen or drivers of waggons and carts. Camoens talks of 'Malays enamoured and valiant Javanese.' It is difficult to keep the peace between the different nationalities and races.

The proprietors have plenty of furnaces and good machinery, including a steam-saw for their fuel-timber. The sheds have attap roofs, as their own tiles are too costly.

White ants are invading the bungalow, where the Sultan and I took coco-nut milk, and Messrs. Fraser and Fowke offered whisky-and-soda to the Duke and Mr. Cobham. Their life here so near Singapore, and the society very frequently gathered by this hospitable Sultan, if rough, cannot be dull like that of remote settlers in Manitoba or Australia. It is delightful scenery, and they have a flourishing business, and are made much of by their landlord the Sultan, who is using many of the bricks and tiles for the new palace he is building at Muar. Among their chief troubles are the white ants, which are, however, easily stopped in the beginning of their ravages with arsenic, tar, &c. I never saw such a place as Johore for ants of all sorts, and insects with wings and stings. One gets used to seeing the ants running over the white table-cloth ; they do not hurt, but they tickle. They fly in at the windows in countless numbers when the lamps are lighted ; but they are not intolerable like the mosquitoes.

I looked about for alligators in the river, as I had read in books on the Malay peninsula that alligators are so thick that you cannot sit on a log without its coming to life and turning to an alligator. Another illusion dispelled. They said it was the fault of the tide.

This evening the Sultan had a good many additional visitors, including several ladies, at

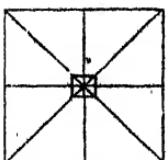
dinner. Aleck played the Sultan's own ivory pipes decked with red tartan ribbons.

We tasted the durian-fruit disguised as a conserve; it was eatable, but not very good; it reminded us all too much of the powders taken in jam of our youthful days, when all life was not bliss, whatever the poets feign. The Sultan laughed, thinking he had cheated us into liking durian. We could not exactly tell him it was horrid.

After dinner, we drove in the Sultan's gharries to the famous gambling-house that we had heard so much about, and which it is etiquette for every guest of the Sultan to visit once at least. We were taken first to see a Chinese theatre, which was not much unlike the Chinese opera, only there was shouting instead of screaming. The piece was tragic, but very funny. The heroine committed suicide by cutting off her head with a sword; she sprang to life again two seconds afterwards and did it again—that is, it was encored. Several of the other characters likewise committed suicide on the stage, but in different forms. It appeared to be entirely a matter of personal choice, for we could not detect any circumstance that drove them to it.

Then the Sultan, according it seems to custom, handed us each ten dollars to gamble with. The game is excessively simple; the superintendent Chinaman, or croupier, twirls a small brass teetotum containing a cube coloured half-red, half-white. When it stops he lifts the cover and you win or lose according to where the colour you have backed drops. The board is crossed and again crossed

diagonally
your stake
the colour
your stake



in lines of white and red. If it is on the central lines and is what you have backed, is tripled ; and if you win on one of the diagonals you receive as much again as your stake. If the cube falls with the wrong colour upon the lines you have backed you lose, as you do if it falls on any of the other lines but those your stakes are on. All winnings pay ten per cent. to the bank. It seems perfectly fair play, and the people are passionately fond of trying their luck or tempting their fate. I was a winner in a small way, but I should not care to go there often. First, the place was hot and close—not at all a gambling palace, but a small upper room, approached through several stuffy rooms used indifferently for sleeping and gambling, furnished by a small wooden table, round which we all crowded ; secondly, I see it is a horribly demoralizing thing. I am glad to have seen it once, but it does not excite me in the way I have read of gambling acting on most people. The Duke said it did not stir him either ; but it is not easy to imagine a rich duke being excited by gambling for dollars and fractions. I was glad to come away, and did not go again, having once subscribed to the etiquette of Johore.

We usually took our first breakfast alone in our rooms, but one morning Bertha came in to tell me that the Sultan wished the Duke and the ladies to take coffee with him early in his own apartments. I dressed in a hurry, and went through another long suite of handsomely-furnished apartments—

with no end of spare bed-rooms—to the Sultan's pleasant morning-room. It is His Highness's custom to present all his visitors, the ladies with a sarong, the gentlemen with a malacca cane. He gave me both, a pretty green plaid silk sarong and a grey clouded cane, a ratan, silver-mounted.

Dato Meldrum says the malacca cane is found everywhere in the forest; like other ratans, it climbs trees, descends again, runs along the ground, and perhaps ascends another tree. It is sometimes as much as five hundred feet long. There are many different kinds of ratans or canes, some no thicker than a quill, others thicker than a good-sized walking-stick. It is a very useful plant—indeed, it is a fail-me-never to the native.

The Sultan gave the Duke and Mr. Cobham each a box of native Johore tea, and to the Duke a large map of his territory. Sultan Abubeker is opening up the country energetically. He has attracted a multitude of Javanese, Chinese, and other settlers here; he has made Johore Baru a free port, with only small dues, and gives a free grant of land to settlers. He makes good roads, and villages spring up beside them as if by magic. By these and other enlightened measures the Sultan is yearly increasing his influence and his income. Instead of being crushed by the prosperity of Singapore, he is using the Lion City as a market, or rather a central dépôt for the distribution of his native productions. The territory of Johore, Muar, and their dependencies consist of about ten thousand square miles, and are bounded on the north by the native state of Pahang

and the British settlement of Malacca. The population of this southern part of the territory, exclusive of Muar, is about one hundred thousand Chinese and fifty thousand Malays.

We all put on our sarongs for tiffin. Lady Clare arranged one about her head in the way the women of the country wear them: mine was knotted at the side for me as the Malay women wear them, when their flow is not unlike the lines of the Greek drapery as worn by the *Venus de Milo*. The Duke wore his carelessly arranged, but Mr. Cobham and Mr. Swan were dressed by the secretary and others in complete Malay gentleman's costume. This fancy dress amused the native servants very much, and also the Sultan when he came in an hour late, having been to Singapore on business.

Several of the principal residents in Johore lunched with us; the Sultan having asked Mrs. Bentley, the agreeable wife of the Johore attorney-general, who lives close by the Sultan's grounds, to do the honours of the Istana. Prince Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar, who is making the tour of the planet, arrived this day on a visit to the Sultan. •

We were invited to-day to a garden-party at Mathna, the country-seat of the *Unkoo Abdul Medjid, the Sultan's brother.*

We drove in three carriages to Mathna, a concise word signifying half-way house between two palaces. Many ladies and gentlemen were assembled to play tennis, but the amusements were damped by heavy rain, and tropical rain does indeed damp a garden-

* Unkoo means prince, Unkana princess. Dato, Pasha ? Datine, the feminine thereof.

party ; the long tables spread with tea-cakes, ices, &c., were completely drenched. While the rain continued, we ladies visited the harem, furnished in semi-European style, where the Unkana, a Turkish lady, dressed in black satin, with a 'pouff' dowdily arranged in European fashion, received us dumbly, as she could speak no Frankish language, but cordially ; she was assisted by two other of the Unkoo's younger wives, one in sky-blue satin, rather ill-made, and very ill-fitting, looking like dresses one sees in a cleaner's shop-window. After we had mutually taken stock of each other, and exhausted conversation by signs about the weather, and made a baby squall with terror at our caresses as we handed it from one to another, we said good-bye to the ladies of the harem, and the rain was over. We watched the tennis-players led by Mrs. Bentley, the champion player of Singapore, and soon tiring of that, we walked round the grounds well-planted with strange trees, on some of which grow masses of elk-horn fern, and the inclosure where various sorts of deer are kept, some fallow deer, and one of a native sort very wild and fierce, and saw the plantations and improvements. We had the system of growing Liberian coffee, pepper, and other crops for export explained to us practically. They pay great attention to all this farming.

On leaving Mathna we drove home by a different way, and saw more of the cultivation of tea, coffee, cloves, gambir, pepper, &c., in its various stages ; with all the lesser crops and kitchen-gardening for home and Singapore consumption. Pepper when staked looks like hops twining round stout stumpy

poles. The young plant has many enemies, but it is easily grown when once established. They are very careful in sheltering some sorts of young plants by some coarser-growing vegetables near them, which shall shelter the tender crop from the sun by its larger foliage.

They are opening up the country well; the Sultan is improving his territory vastly.

The Sultan offers fifty dollars for each tiger killed and brought in.

The coffee-trees near Upkoo Medjid's house were a great object of interest to the Sultan and others. They appeared to be in a fair state considering the late dry weather. The Sultan, as well as ourselves, greatly hopes to make Johore and Singapore a coffee-producing land, to take the place of the extinct coffee plantations of Ceylon.

The land is undulating and fertile; round Mathna it looked not unlike a newly-planted pleasure-ground in the North of England, with that tree which looks at a distance so like Scotch fir scattered about the hill-ranges. Specimens of three hundred and fifty kinds of trees from here were sent by Dato Meldrum, by command of the Sultan, to the Forestry Exhibition at Edinburgh in 1885. Between Johore Baru and Mathna there is a Roman Catholic church, besides a chapel for the small Presbyterian community. The mosque and the Chinese joss-houses are in Johore Baru.

It rained heavily as we went home, so we had the attap or roof of the carriage closed. Attap is the Malay word for roof of any sort, not only the

palm-leaf thatch that we call attap, attap of the carriage ; the word sounds very like top or a-top.

To-night there was a large dinner-party at the Istana ; the Sultan blazed with four stars, a very grand aigrette in his cap, and diamond buttons to his short best jacket.

We pulled crackers, and the Sultan's band played during dinner, and Aleck played the pipes. The Prince of Saxe-Weimar, who took me down to dinner, had never heard them before ; he said he did not understand them. Of course no German can like what he has not got to the bottom of : he suffered, but we laughed consumedly at his half-hidden tortures. The Sultan who was next me on the other side thought it fine fun ; he knew all about the pipes —he did, having been in Scotland, and having imported a set of pipes of his own.

One lady of the party was a Japanese in European dress ; she spoke English, but she was very quiet and retiring.

Still the Sultan will not hear of the Duke leaving Johore, as he says he wants to take us to Muar to see his northern territory when he goes there himself shortly. We are not unwilling to stay, for it is really too hot to go out or even to move. Most of us forage in the library for books ; the library is large, but the collection is not extensive. Wilkie Collins is the favourite author, there are also volumes of *Punch* and the *Art Journal*. Our greatest happiness is to sit in thin white morning-wrappers in our rooms pretending to read—but there are ladies to be entertained at luncheon, so brace ourselves to

the work we must. There was also an excursion to inspect the gaol and hospital (whither the hospitable Sultan took the indefatigable Duke), from which it will be rightly inferred that both were creditable to his sovereignty; and to see the Johore saw-mills. Mr. Cobham meanwhile assisted at an examination of the schools. The boys wrote well from English dictation.

The Johore steam saw-mills, established in 1859-60, have gradually increased their plant until they may be pronounced the most extensive concern of the kind in Asia. The Sultan gave facilities and encouragement to a few private individuals to set them a-going, and from their foundation up to the present time large quantities of manufactured timber have been shipped to China, India, Mauritius, Java, Ceylon, &c., besides supplying local demands. The mills lie at a jetty where there is deep water, and facilities for unloading with dispatch. Wood only is burned in the machinery, the fuel being rinds, slabs, and ends. The sawdust is not utilized in any way.

Dato Meldrum, who came on most days to the Istana, to help us to ideas, says Malay wood-cutters are employed to go in the forests to bring the timber in rafts to the mills. A company of six to ten is made up; they are generally friends and relations: a head-man is selected, and he is generally held responsible for the advances of money that are made to them. A sum is paid down when the agreement is made; with this money they purchase a boat and lay in a stock of provisions, tools, &c. In a month the head-

man makes his appearance and receives another advance, reporting progress; this is repeated three, four, or five times, according to the size of the raft they mean to bring. Sometimes six months or more elapse before the raft is brought to the mills, there being many contingencies that interfere with regular work: the habits and customs of the Malays, sickness, rainy weather, and sometimes want of rain sufficient to float the logs out of the small streamlets into which they have been rolled or dragged. Wives and children accompany their husbands, and frequently lend a hand in hauling or rolling the logs out of the forest. They live in the jungle in huts while the trees are being felled, and in huts on the rafts when they are made up and in transit to the mills. They are a quiet, orderly people now; very independent, yet kindly disposed. Their wants are few, as they do not suffer the privations attendant on the rigorous and changeable climate of more northern latitudes. Theirs is a constant summer, monotonous perhaps in its sameness, more or less relaxing, nevertheless very pleasant and enjoyable to them. They take nothing intoxicating, and are very fond of liberty and a free and easy life.

By all this it will be seen that Johore under its present Sultan affords a good field for enterprise to natives as well as Europeans. In Siam civilization is potential; in Johore it is at work.

I was glad to hear, notwithstanding the necessary supply of timber for the saw-mills, that the country is not being disforested, but that all is being done under careful supervision. This is Dato Meldrum's

province, and he has to take care that the land is not desolated as in Ceylon, where 'Government has played fast and loose with its land and what stands on it, and lived on capital instead of interest.' No botanist has ever spent much time in Johore, so Dato Meldrum, who is inspector of forests rather than a regular botanist, says an interesting field is open to the first who goes there. He strongly recommends the British and Johore Governments to plant the invaluable tree, the gutta-percha, which is now getting scarce and very costly; the tree being destroyed in obtaining the gutta. Gutta-percha, or, as the Malays call it, getah-taban, was first discovered, or at least first brought into use from the Johore forests. It was a fortunate thing that just when the telegraph was brought into use gutta-percha appeared in the market. Nothing has been found better adapted for covering deep-sea cables than gutta-percha.

We had a Malay curry fifty dishes strong to-day, with sambals in proportion; the Prince of Saxe-Weimar is as much afraid of it as he is of the bagpipes. A Malay curry is vast and potent, like the German army. After luncheon we all assembled in the portico and vestibule to watch a thunder-storm and a heavy tropical downpour, while those who were better used to such things sat down to play cards in the large pillared hall. Rain was in itself a novelty to us, for, until our return to Singapore, we had not seen a drop of rain since leaving England early in December. Now it fell in sheets and deluges, flooding the pavements, and shooting from

the roofs and streaming down the pathways, while blue lightning flashed out of the dark cloud masses over the Straits of Salat Tambran, and thunder pealed loud enough to deafen even ears attuned to the Chinese opera. For one comfort, it cooled the air, and the weaker spirits went for an easy drive afterwards. We energetic ones, the Sultan, Duke, Prince, Commissioner, and author, went in the Sultan's launch to the police-station of Pasai Godown, or, as the Sultan himself calls it, Makao Koodang, where we picnicked, as well as inspected the station and the young coffee plantations.

Though river-police are still required to keep down piracy; things have much improved in this southern part of the Malay peninsula under the Sultan's rule. As Miss Bird tells us, formerly no boat could go up or down Malay rivers without paying black-mail to one or two river rajahs; but the Chinese settlers as well as the pirates are powerful men, and help the cause of law and order by taking their own part. The Sultan inspects these police stations periodically. The high jetty here is of split bamboo, making one of the frail platforms on stilts which are here considered convenient piers, easier for monkeys to climb on than for ladies to land by; this is approached by a most difficult ladder, inaccurately so called, man-trap describes it better. It is a steep and slippery aerial ladder of three round rungs, each about two and a half feet apart, to which one must cling tight, for a false step would precipitate one into the river and deep mud.

The Sultan tells me olives grow wild here in the

jungle, but they are not cultivated. I suggested he should grow them. He asked me if I thought seeds would grow. I thought cuttings would do better and quicker, the delicate French and the large Spanish olives struck in pots and carried out; from these grafts might be taken to graft on to the wild olive-trees. This seemed a bright idea to him; he said he should put it into execution. He is always on the look-out for new ideas and improvements, especially in the way of crops; often asking my really very unimportant opinion about cultivation in general.

On returning, we find the green woods have turned black, the green sea has turned white, and the blue sea, chameleon-like, has turned tawny and grey, gathering into deep dim purples. We reached the Istana in time to keep the guests invited to dinner waiting three-quarters-of-an-hour only. As it was a small party, not more than twenty, the Sultan only wore his second-best diamond aigrette; the Duke wore only the order of the Thistle, but Prince Bernhard was profusely decorated.

We thought the Prince of Saxe-Weimar was going to have a fit, with suppressed ecstasy; he bursts and chokes so when Aleck begins to 'play the pipes. He still did not understand it, as Ah Sin-like he does not understand billiards either; he has not yet concentrated his great mind on these subjects. The attendants as usual look closely at Aleck's kilt amusedly and amazedly, as if he had not arranged his sarong properly. A fine handsome lad of fresh colour, he looks like a being of another 'star from

these dusky, quiet, stealthy-footed Malays, as he strides and marches round the table Scottish fashion.

On the 10th of March we were keeping the Prince of Wales' silver-wedding, when the Sultan, who had gone across to Tyersall, telephoned the news of the death of the old Emperor of Germany ; the flags on the yacht were placed half-mast high, and everyone, Malays as well as Europeans, expressed respectful sympathy with the Emperor Frederick's sad condition. Boats have been ordered at half-past four to take us to the yacht to give a tea-party to the Johore ladies. It is sultry and it looks like a storm coming on. There is the first peal of thunder. The tall Punjaubee sentry shelters himself under the thick palm-trees. Our tea-party came off after all, for the rain ceased just at the time they told us it would do so. Rain is so regular in its habits here that they can always calculate upon its movements.

Lightning was playing all round the ship, and fine effects of cloud were seen over the straits, the nearer forests, and the distant hills. The views, when we landed for a walk, were glorious up on the hill behind the Istana, which the Sultan has had laid out in walks, and planted as a fine public garden, with gardenias blossoming in the shrubberies, and all manner of delightful tropical trees and flowers. Below this hill, near the Istana, a large town-hall is being built and nearly finished, as well as a justice-room and public offices, with broad steps leading to the water-side.

On Sunday, March 11th, we had a large full-dress state dinner to celebrate our last evening at Johore.

Several notabilities from Singapore were invited to meet the Duke. The guests' attire was various : the European gentlemen mostly wore uniform or levée dress ; there were many fezzes with diamond aigrettes worn by Malay princes. The Sultan was glittering with stars and diamond and ruby buttons down his monkey jacket, and gay with ribbons, among them the yellow ribbon of the Crown of Johore. There were a good many ladies present on this occasion.

We had the whole of the gold Ellenborough banquet service for this one last evening, all dressed with purple sprays of the bougainvillea. Eleven large centre-pieces including three great candelabra, and wine-coolers used as flower-vases ; twenty lesser raised pieces holding fairy lamps (above one's eyes) ; and twenty salt-cellars and the same number of pepper-boxes, these smaller things being of really artistic form and workmanship. The *coup d'œil* was dazzling on entering the long dining-room, with the mass of crimson-purple and gold, all regal and stately. The room was lighted besides by lamps in sconces round the walls, and the archway openings all round filled with soft greenery of ferns gave the necessary contrast of repose and shade.

Speeches were made at this farewell dinner. His Highness the Sultan proposed the Duke of Sutherland's health in a few appropriate words in Malay, elegantly translated by the accomplished Dato Secretary, and his Grace, in replying, said he was not likely soon to forget the royal hospitality of Johore ; that 'when he arrived he did not feel like a stranger, as he had not only the honour of His Highness's acquaintance

before, but he had heard so much about him from the Prince of Wales that it was like visiting an old friend.

This also the secretary fluently translated into Malay, and it was received with cheers of approval from the Malay princes assembled.

The Sultan has asked us to accompany him in his yacht, the *Pantie*, in a journey to Muar, the northern province of his territory. This place is about ten leagues south of Malacca. At its embouchure the river is six hundred yards wide, and, eighteen miles up, it diminishes to one-sixth of this breadth. We cannot go up in the *Sans Peur*, as the coast is shallow, and a sand-bar obstructs the river's mouth, on which there is no more than three-quarters of a fathom of water. The *Pantie*, which draws eight feet of water, is able to get about easily, where we, drawing fourteen feet, should stick hopelessly. In the *Pantie* we shall cross the bar easily at flood-tide. Hey for the land of peacocks, gold, and ivory !

CHAPTER XI.

MUAR.

And once more I said ye stars, ye waters,
 On my heart your mighty charm renew ;
 Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,
 Feel my soul becoming vast like you.

But with joy the stars perform their shining,
 And the sea its long moon-silvered roll ;
 For alone they live, nor pine with noting
 All the fever of some differing soul.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

THE place we are going to is called Bundac Maharanee. All our luggage was carried down to the *Sans Peur*, which was sent off before us, at nine a.m., so as to save the tide in the straits, as she draws too much water for the shallow western passage, except at flood-tide. How pretty the white ship looks as she glides away, leaving a great blank behind the palm-trees where she stood. The Sultan's smaller yacht takes her place before the palace, waiting to take us on to Muar.

The Sultan gave us each a large photograph of himself, and Dato Meldrum sent me a collection of orchids and nepenthes, for which Johore is famous,

to carry home to England. The Sultan's son, a tall youth who is shortly going to finish his education in England, was presented to the Duke; we had not seen him before.

'Stop for this investiture,' cries Mr. Cobham, as I was hurrying to put away my sketching-tackle, &c.; and we all assembled in the middle hall.

A gold tray was brought forward by some attendants in rich costume. On it was a box containing the collar, star, ribbon, and jewel of the order of the Crown of Johore, of which honour the Duke of Sutherland is the first European recipient. The Sultan made a speech (in Malay) on presenting this to the Duke, who is now an *Unkoo* as well as a Duke.

We bade farewell all round to the large party, including most of the *datos*, who accompanied us to the Sultan's yacht. The European residents cheered us in British style from the pier, three times three, and we waved handkerchiefs while standing on the hurricane-deck of the *Pantie*, a word meaning the high hill beyond the sand-bank at the mouth of the Johore river. *Unkoo Slayman*, a brother of the Sultan, and the Prince of Saxe-Weimar accompanied us to Muar.

We steamed 'out by the western channel of the Straits of Salat Tambran, opposite the passage we came in by in coming to Johore, passing the distant view of the fine blue hill-range beyond the creeks of the *Scudai* river, and between the mangrove-fringed islets and undulating river-banks. This Malayan Bosphorus is the place alluded to by Cainoens in the *Lusiad*:

• But on the point of land see Sincapoor,
Where narrow strait admits of ships but few.'

Now we have been all round the island of Singapore, as well as across and about it.

At four p.m. a second luncheon was spread on deck, with several strange dishes, and a great mould of stiff sea-weed jelly, a national dish, which is something like Turkish delight. We then put out to sea, and overtook the *Sans Peur*, which had been ordered to go 'dead slow,' and mutually dipped our colours. Aleck comforted Prince Bernhard by a tune on the pipes; and, as the Sultan's box of games had been brought on board, Lady Clare taught him beggar-my-neighbour, while Mr. Swan taught poker to one of the datos; the Duke and I sharing, by turns, the only book on board, 'Sarong and Kris.' The rest of the datos were interested in the 'skitch' I was making of the fine-peaked outline of the Island of Carimoon.

At six o'clock the table was laid for dinner—the Sultan was determined to fatten us—but the wind had risen and there were heavy clouds ahead; a thunderstorm soon followed with cold wind. We now saw the great superiority of the *Sans Peur* as a sea-going vessel to this pretty little fair-weather craft. The hurricane-deck that we had envied in the smooth sunny waters of the straits was now swamped with rain, notwithstanding the thick awning and side curtains, and we wondered how they were going to light the table. They hung ship-lanterns all round, and, the rain having ceased, they spread gratings for our feet, and the Sultan's good

curry and champagne soon warmed us to cheerfulness. A stub-tailed Malay cat, like a Manx cat, was a favourite on board. The Siamese cats are also tailless.

After this we signalled the *Sans Peur* by a blue light, and the Duke, Mr. Cobham, and I went on board with some difficulty in the dark on account of the boat bobbing up and down so much. Lady Clare and Bertha remained on board the *Pantie*.

Next morning we had arrived off a flat coast with low islets to the west, and larger, loftier isles on the eastern side, a lofty blue peak peeping out above the clouds which lay heavy on the low palm-fringed coast. This is 'Mount Ophir 'with its golden history.' Many hills here are named Mount Ophir. The gold-mines are called 'ophirs' by the Malays. The Sultan's yacht lay alongside of us.

We breakfasted at seven o'clock, and went on board the *Pantie*, where two fine tall young men, one in gold, the other in silver-laced uniform, were presented by the Sultan as his nephews. They spoke English, one of them had been educated in England. Both these handsome young men are clever; one has surveyed the territory and made the large map of Johore that the Sultan gave to the Duke, the other is a skilful engineer. All this family are highly intelligent. The Sultan kept his nephews waiting at a distance in their launch till the Duke came on board the *Pantie*, when he called them alongside and on board and introduced them. Mr. Swan, who understands Malay, told us he said to them quite sharply,

‘Now mind you talk to these English people ; if you can’t talk sense talk nonsense, only talk plenty.’

Does the Sultan think one sort of talk is as good as another for English ladies ? However, they talked very good sense indeed.

We anchored in the Muar river, opposite a large bungalow occupied by the Sultan’s nephews ; and a gay townlet turned out all its gaily-dressed inhabitants to welcome the Sultan and his guests. The whole settlement was waiting at the pier to receive us, the Malays wearing divers tartan garments, besides the national sarong, of Rob Roy and other tartans. The blue-gowned Chinese filed off after seeing the great sight, the idler Malays hovered about to see us get into the gharries and other carriages which were waiting to take us to see the country, and the new palace that the Sultan is building, in order that he may reside at Muar occasionally and foster his promising young colony. The town of Bundac Maharanee is not five years old, but it is already very thriving. Life moves very quickly out here when the English and Chinese have once come to see the natural advantages of a place, and the rapid growth of Nature answers to their efforts. In incredibly few years, when roads are once made, the jungle gives up its wealth to the clearer, and a numerous population follows the navigator and cultivator. Houses are built, estates are planted, and money flows in.

Sultan Abubeker encourages the industrious Chinese ; he says he finds them valuable as original settlers, as they are indefatigable labourers, clearing

the jungle, cultivating the ground, and turning everything to account: then, as he sees openings,—and he is always looking for them,—he can set up companies for working mills, mines, &c., with Chinese labour under European direction. His feeling towards railways is the direct converse of that of the Siamese. He does all he can to attract railway companies, feeling that population will follow the railway. He has already made roads, drained on one side by narrow canals navigable for the light native boats: these roads were now heavy after the rain, our piebald ponies felt them to be so. Filling the light gharries, we felt like costermongers over-crowding their carts on a Sunday, and we got out to walk as soon as our hosts would allow us to do so.

The blue Mount Ophir looks fine beyond the palm forest in which the new Istana is being built. This palace, a large building situated in the very heart of the forest, is expected to be ready in about ten months from the date of our visit. It is to be furnished from London. The large supply of attap or nipah palm grown here is in readiness for roofing and building the new villages which are expected to gather round the new palace, so soon as the Sultan takes up his abode here. The nipah-palm grows nothing but the attap for roofing and walls, which is valuable; the fruit is insignificant.

On the road back to the bungalow, we were struck with the comfortable and prosperous appearance of the settlement and the good cultivation of the ground: the town is chiefly Chinese, the Malays keeping to the country and suburbs.

Luncheon was laid for us in the large airy verandah on the first-floor which is used as a dining-room, though not often for such a large party, I suspect, from the number of birds' nests in the rafters of the verandah on the ground-floor below.

This noontide repast was completely a Malay meal, picturesque and plentiful. A whole kid, skilfully roasted so as to retain its juices, and stuffed with rice and raisins, reminded us of the description of the Emir's repast in 'Tancred ;' this was carved by Mr. Cobham, who, from his residence in Cyprus, was well used to large dishes of this kind. There were vast preparations of Malay curry with countless dishes of sambals, and in the centre of the table a huge dish of royal yellow rice, set with eggs, dyed deep purple, stuck on with tinsel flowers and long ornamental pins ; a sort of Christmas tree stood on the top of the high-piled dish, with crimson woollen balls for flowers and crimson cloth stars and green tinsel leaves ; it was altogether a glorified and majestic curry.

The table was decorated with the brilliantly variegated crotons which admirably do duty for flowers here. One gorgeous croton, with richly-coloured, pendulous leaves nearly a foot long, was very handsome as a central ornament.

A dish of pine-apple, minced with fish, turmeric, saffron and chillies, was excellent. Then came the *course de résistance*, the durian, which the Sultan made such a point of our enjoying.

' We have, what you call, we have durian.'

‘ Oh, thank you ;’ aside, ‘ I’ll give you my share, Prince.’

Soup-plates extra large and deep were brought for the durian, prepared in a thick, porridge-like way. We do not think we can manage it. This is only our second breakfast, and we hear there is to be a third at four o’clock !

Durian is an acquired taste, and, to say the least of it, it is a little gamey. Its flavour reminded the gentlemen too forcibly of the Wat Sakhèt at Bangkok. Then came a course of fifteen different kinds of puddings, or large flat cakes about an inch and a half thick, made of coco-nut, ground rice, and pith of various edible palms, &c. Some of these were very good, though most of them were too sweet, and tasting strongly, one would say, of bacon-fat, were these people not Mohammedans. Our hospitable entertainers were afflicted because we could only eat half an inch or so of the puddings we tried ; but it was like eating bride-cake, one cannot get through pounds of this at a sitting. We felt like young employés at a confectioner’s with the run of the shop on the first day. This feeling was quite a new experience to the Duke, and perhaps to all of us.

A tiger was to be exhibited.

‘ Come and see him,’ said the Sultan.

We put a few questions first.

‘ A baby tiger ?’

‘ No, not baby tiger ; what you call great-grand-father tiger.’

Oh, we thought we would just peep and see what sort of collar he had on. We saw several

men taking off their state sarongs to get him put into a boat for us to look at. The Sultan offered him to the Duke as a present.

‘He’s for you,’ said the Sultan to the Duke. It was good to see the Duke’s face of dismay.

‘But I can’t feed him; he wants half a man every day!'

His Grace remembered that his men would not be likely to oblige, and at that rate even the stout Herries would only last him for three days. We reflected that at the rate of a man every other day it would soon be our turn, leaving to the last those more necessary for the navigation of the ship -- and the tiger.

We all exclaimed ‘No!’ at the idea of his coming on board the *Sans Peur*, and we kept the broad space of green turf before the bungalow well between us and the tiger. Though the tall posts supporting the verandah roof are set on hewn granite bases, the trellis-work of the balconies would be but a frail defence against the onset of a great-grandfather tiger.

There is a fine, broad river here, broader than the Thames at Richmond. They say it goes on over a hundred miles farther, and is as broad nearly all the way. The winding of this river, according to the Prince’s map, is remarkable, so it does not go so very deep into the country after all. It takes its rise in Mount Ophir, as does the Johore river on the east of the territory, on which the town of Johore itself is situated (not Johore Baru but the chief town). The national Malay boat has a curved prow, a sort of

crook. Its shape, which is very graceful, is exactly that of an old Chelsea china butter-boat.

The heat—and the heavy luncheon—bring a drowsiness over some of the party, who dream they are in England again as they are lulled by the frequent sound of bells, like church bells. Billiard-balls are clicking below, and the German prince, after his nap, takes a pack of *ecarté* cards from his pocket and practises combinations by himself.

Bundac itself, as seen from the verandah, is more like an English village than an Oriental town; with the donkey grazing on the green, enclosed with posts and chains. The attap roofs look like thatch, the carpenters' work of joists and beams yonder where they are red-tiling a roof is very English-like; the tiles are semi-circular. The areca and coco-nut palms in the background alone show it is not European, for the majority of the costumes seen near the princes' bungalow show a European tendency. Three sheep and one pig are grazing on the common, and a horse and a draught cow (of the humped breed) are lying under the clump of bamboos in the centre of the green. Nearer me is a girl at play, wearing a white jacket, red cap, and a long sarong. I thought she was dancing by the way she waved her arms; she is flying her kite.

We walked up the Chinese street and did a little shopping. I happened to admire a tall brown vase with numerous handles, when the Sultan's nephew turned to some of his men and ordered it to be lifted for me into the boat which was carrying our

provisions to the *Sans Peur*. We were taken to the much-ornamented house of the Capitan China, where we found a refection of tea with fruits and pastry spread on a table before a sideboard, or kind of domestic altar, covered with crimson silk beautifully embroidered. We had thimblefulls of exquisitely fragrant tea in doll's tea-cups, and cakes and a dark-green orange each to carry away.

The Capitan China is the head-man of a Chinese colony, chief magistrate, and responsible for the behaviour of his countrymen. The Sultan of Johore and Muar is very fond of the Chinese. Their principles are such as make Orientals love them much better than we are able to do; as Quang Chaw, a learned mandarin, says: 'Man must be patient, and likewise exceedingly respectful. All good laws teach this; and all dutiful Chinese reverence the laws, because they are the finest fruits and flowers which the heavenly sun extracts from the roots of wisdom.'

Dreading the four o'clock repast, which we gathered from report was to be stupendous, we made the threatening appearance of the weather an excuse for making an earlier start, as we had to get out to the *Sane Peur*, which was a long way off.

We embarked in a large steam-launch to go out to the *Pantie*, which was anchored at some distance off up-stream. On board the *Pantie* we saw the tiger in his cage, but declined having the creature exhibited more fully. The *Straits Times* of March 20th says: 'A very fine tiger was brought from Muar by the Sultan, and is now exhibited in Johore Baru; it is one of the largest ever seen in these parts.'

And this was to have been our fellow-passenger ! The *Sans Peur* must have changed its name had that tiger come on board. A thunderstorm came on while we were on board the *Pantie* with the tiger, which delayed our departure somewhat. The hospitable Sultan insisted upon our having champagne, and himself led the cheering over a glass of water; we replied by three times three, and one hearty British cheer more for the Sultan.

Again on board the launch to go out to the *Sans Peur*, which stood at four miles out to sea beyond the shallow sand-banks and the bar. The German prince was left behind lamenting, but the Sultan, with the princes and datos and Mr. Swan, accompanied us to the last, and we steamed out past the quaint fishing villages of matting and attap huts reared on unusually lofty piles in the water-covered mud-banks. The houses look more like bird-cages than human habitations ; some of them at a distance give one the idea of magnified lobster-pots set on poles. From the tops of the houses are set tall fishing-rods with lines attached, very long and strong to catch the larger fish. These peculiar villages just now only supply Muar with fish, but the Sultan tells us they could supply half London. The quality of the tropical fish is vastly inferior to ours.

The idea of these stilted houses of the Malays is perhaps borrowed from the mangrove, the screw-pine, and many Malayan stilted plants, stilted in their natural effort to keep themselves from rotting. Nearly all the best palms are Malayan, and many even of these are stilted when grown by river banks, partly because the soil washes away from beneath

them. This curious spectacle of watery dwellings will not readily be forgotten, though Muar is fading away into the past, the dim past, as Johore and Siam have already got behind our lives.

It rained heavily just as we reached the *Sans Peur*, which made it difficult to ship our provisions, including ice, palm-sugar wrapped in palm-leaves, coco-nuts, and other fruits, most of which we knew pretty well by this time, and seven durians, which the Sultan gave us in order that we might acquire the taste for them. These solid, heavy, prickly fruits are highly valued. They give the name to these Straits of Durian, the only place where this fruit grows naturally—which is as well—though it is much relished by the natives and those who have learnt to like it.

Besides these things, the Sultan supplied us with boxes of Johore tea, plenty of live poultry, and a goat and other provisions. He seemed to think he could never do enough to show his love for the Duke, and, for that matter, for all the rest of us. The Sultan, I think, hoped we should take kindly to the sugar-candy, as he called the palm-sugar, and bring it into notice in England, so that it may become an article of commerce. Perhaps it is the manner of its preparation that makes it less palatable than French sweetmeats, and this may be improved. I brought some home, and I have heard school-boys pronounce it as being like concentrated ginger-bread.

Farewell to the Sultan, princes and datos, and to Mr. Swan, who is going to remain behind con-

structing Malayan railways. We shall miss him much. Friends may come and friends may go, but we go on for ever, we feel, as the *Sans Peur* weighs her anchor, and 'we go on our way, and we see them no more.'

The last we have heard of Mr. Swan was by letter, wherein he mentions his cook having been eaten by a tiger. He waited some time for dinner—in Malayan jungles—and supposed the cook was drunk or had run away. Lo, the poor fellow had been himself prepared for a tiger's dinner.

A thunderstorm hides the steam-launch from our view; but Mount Ophir shines out blue and brilliant, its crest standing out clear-cut among the clouds. The thunderstorms have always crossed us from east to west. We are nearly opposite Malacca. Now for the long sea-passages to weary us, and bring out the natural man in our dispositions and tempers. This should be poetical and interesting. Is it often so, or ever so?

Let us chase away dull care, and go and make friends with the happy family on board—rabbits, ducks, fowls, kid, monkeys, mongoose, &c. What a mercy the tiger is not on board too! How pretty it is to see the mother and baby monkey clasping each other so lovingly—a long-tailed variety this, with tails not prehensile, like our poor dead Jacko's. The black minah bird with the yellow beak, who tries to talk English; the two prettily-coloured parakeets, and the Java sparrows are still well. The zebra-parakeet, with the small beak which did not break the rounded outline of his head, flew

away. He bit his way out of the slight bamboo cage, and was washed off the rigging by the rain.

Johore is called one of the protected states.

'Well,' says the Duke, 'we've been protecting it for the last ten days.'

The way our Queen is supposed to have given, as it is said, the title of sultan to the Maharajah of Johore is this: that, as she had no objection to styling him sultan if he wished it,—in fact, she recognised him as such. She has no power to confer such a title, but her recognition indeed gives it.

The ceremony of the coronation, with a regal diadem, took place in the ball-room of the palace at Johore Baru. No ladies were allowed to be present in the room; but the European ladies of Johore and Singapore looked down on the scene from the latticed-gratings above the pictures.

We live the contemplative life at sea. Though we are glad of the rest, it is dull enough during the heavy showers, after the gaieties of eastern courts; the only objects of out-look being two small pudding-shaped islets, of the same apparent size and form, on the port and starboard sides. They appear to be useful as points for steering, or to determine our position.

We expect to reach Colombo in six days from now. It felt homely on board the yacht, as we settled down to our books and works. I distinguished myself by an immortal work—but I will relate the circumstance. We were at breakfast, and the others could not get away; the smooth sea gave them no reasonable excuse for moving.

‘I will recite you part of a poem I composed this morning myself,’ said I. (A thrill—of delight, I was sure—passed through the audience, but I disclaimed it modestly.) ‘Don’t shudder; it is but a fragment.’

They looked attentive. A less accurate observer would have said resigned. I began—

‘Through Siam and Malaysia though we may trot,
Wherever we wander there’s no place like the yacht.’

It had a delirious success. They applauded loudly, quite stopping my voice. There may have been finer poems, though they all thought so highly of this, even the Duke (who is an admitted judge, in virtue of his alleged descent from the respectable Gower); but seldom has a contemporary work so immediate a success. They thought it perfect in itself, needing no addition. As a great French critic says, ‘Un sonnet vaut mieux qu’un poème.’

I could see to read the small print of Crawford’s ‘Dictionary of the Eastern Archipelago’ till twenty minutes past six, and to sketch the grand outline of the Golden Mountain of Sumatra, sometimes (wrongly) called Mount Ophir. This fine mountain, nine thousand two hundred feet in height, is a much grander object than the Mount Ophir of the Malay peninsula, which is only four thousand three hundred and twenty feet.

It was pleasant in the later evening to sit on the bridge watching the phosphorescence and the stars, the Pole Star, the Great Bear, Orion, and the Southern Cross, all visible at once. As we leave the shelter of Sumatra, we have at night the usual

struggle with the port-holes, some rolling besides in the night, and our stout bos'un's fairy footfall up on deck, laying his strength to the 'strings' tuning them up to the breeze. Up on deck to find a blue sea and fair wind; an outward-bound steamer going to the pretty places we have left, and flying-fish taking long flights, are the only glimpses of life in the whole circle of thirty miles round beyond the bulwarks. A flying-fish was caught as it fell on the top of the deck-house, sixteen feet or more above the sea. One flying-fish, trying to fly right over the ship, was caught in the sails and knocked down. A shark was pursuing a shoal of these fish. The oceanic flying-fish differs from the Mediterranean variety in being more slender and more silvery in colour, and from the ventral fins being seated near the pectoral ones, besides being much smaller and of a slightly lunate form.

As we have all the sails set, we are not able to have the large awnings spread, and, though it is a glacier blue sea, there is no glacier coolness. At last our provisions fail us a good deal. The goat is not tempting; the champagne and cider are popping, and being wasted. Of ice we have none left; what the Sultan gave us did not last long. The bananas are nearly finished, and the tinned soups, &c., are spoiled with the hot weather. We look to Colombo as a place where we shall get everything, from sapphires to soda-water.

The Duke is fond of music; so, besides the second cook's banjo and Dark Charlie's wheezy cornopean, a dismal jemmy of an accordion is much affected by one of the men. We almost feel this a judgment

upon us for having teased Prince Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar so mercilessly with the bagpipes.

Since leaving Egypt, where the sunsets are really fine, the average sunset has been the tamest of spectacles. As the much-talked-of big stars are a fraud, and the glorious sunsets a delusion, so was the vaunted 'kief' that we have always heard of as enwrapping the orientals in its 'broidery of bliss,' and which we expected likewise to enjoy when there should be nothing else to do. Perhaps in these last days of sailing from Sumatra to Ceylon were the only hours when we felt anything approaching the condition of Nirvana, or of 'kief,' as it is described in the 'romance of eastern travel.'

Eastern life, as I saw it—or as it seemed to me—was a state not of 'kief,' but of perpetual gadding about, the in-between hours redcened by riding in the early morning and lawn-tennis in the afternoon. We had been reading of Nirvana—in Edwin Arnold's poems—and found high jinks.

• Sixth or seventh illusion dispelled.

In this book, though I have been moderate in my descriptions, I have shown, what is rarely seen, in how much comfort it is possible sometimes to leave the beaten tracks of travel. We had read the 'Golden Chersonese' by Miss Bird, and heard of the 'Chersonese with the Gilding off,' by a resident in Singapore, a book regarded here as truthful; but we found we must lay more gilding on, and deck our tale with jewels. I do not mean the Sultan's rubies, but the potentialities of these countries, with their immense seaboard; and the vegetable and mineral

productions of the teeming soil. Ruskin reminds us that all wealth comes from the earth, and here the earth's riches are greater than in most places, partly so on account of the moist climate ; and we are not yet educated up to the use of these wonderful productions of Nature, which, without the aid of the Chinese and Javanese, we cannot get at, for the Malays will not work, and we in this climate cannot dig, but only direct the digging.

Wealth indeed ! Think of all these trees and plants which it is an education in itself to know and know the use of. Few can realise the marvels of the forest universe—from the tapioca at our feet that makes our puddings to the soaring talipot which feeds our minds with the literature of the East.

What I have gathered from my short visit to the East is a deep respect for China as a nation ; the mother of many future industrious, prosperous colonies. Singapore shows what can be done by the friendly fusion, or rather combined action, of the leading races of Europe with the Chinese, and Muar bids fair to follow on the same traditions.

CHAPTER XII.

CEYLON.

And mark me, that untravelled man
 Who never saw Mazinderan,
 And all the charms its bowers possess,
 Has never tasted happiness.

FIRDAUSI.

LAND, HO ! Tumble up, my hearties !

The morning of Monday, the 19th of March, showed us the Beautiful Island on our starboard bow. The blue hills of Ceylon as azure as the sea itself.

‘ Herries, there’s a boat with some fish,’ cries the Duke.

Delightful excitement. We have lived on tinned fish for a long time ; no eggs left, no fruit, no meat ; we are reduced to tins, with rice and potatoes. It has become a duty to drink the cider and champagne to keep them from popping. We stop to negotiate with three men who sit pinching their thin mahogany legs in the trough of a hollow tree, which forms the keel of their catamaran ; so as to make a little room for their catch of fish of curious colours, azure blue, canary colour, and the brightest of scarlet ;

no boiled lobster ever equalled the intense and fiery scarlet of one sort of these fish. We all exclaimed at its vivid colour. The dark men seated themselves somewhat more comfortably when we had bought their fish, and the man perched on the outrigger for lack of space, came inside the catamaran.

We passed Point de Galle at two p.m., and Colombo light was sighted at dusk.

Since the harbour has been improved at Colombo, Point de Galle has lost all its importance with the loss of the mail steamers. Trincomalee is the naval station.

We anchored at Colombo at 9.45 p.m.

One of the Messageries steamers lying near us looks big and busy as a well-lighted town ; the sing-song of the coolies concluding her lading is continued till very late. These coolies, as at Aden and in the Indian ports, are always singing the same monotonous tune with a turn in it.

This time—or maybe it is at this time of night we notice it—we do indeed smell the fragrance of Ceylon ; spicy, heavy, and oppressive like the odours of Bangkok. Herries counsels us to close our ports because of malaria ; it is a question whether we will be poisoned or stifled ? Like Fair Rosamond, I choose the sweetened poison.

A cargo of mails being brought on board in the morning, we fall to and greedily devour our letters and newspapers ; then, animal hunger coming on, we go ashore to the Grand Oriental Hotel to feed on fresh provisions. Every order or message is written on chits, or slips of paper ; which chits indeed answer the

purpose of speech in Ceylon and Singapore, as the attendants do not for the most part understand English. Deaf and dumb people might make themselves very comfortable in these parts with chits.

We watched in the entrance an Indian juggler's performance, including the surprising and elegant sleight-of-hand shown in promoting the growth of a mango-tree from a seedling to a stout green sapling covered with fresh leaves.

Then we went to see the 'celebrated great cat's-eye,' and other gems of a native jeweller ; sapphires, cats'-eyes, and the Alexandrite, which shows green by day and red by night, form the principal stock. Moonstones are hardly looked upon here in the light of jewels.

The appearance of the Cingalese men, with their long shiny black hair twisted in a knot behind and kept smooth by a round tortoiseshell comb, strikes us as just as strange after Malaya as after Europe, and just as puzzling. Is a being with shiny ringlets and earrings, in a petticoat, fat and feminine-looking, but with a moustache, otherwise than of doubtful gender? It is a Cingalese. This is a word that you may spell any way you please, Cingalese, Singhalese, Sinhalese, &c., putting an accent here and there to make it look better—more learned.

We went off to the *Sans Peur* in the full glow of sunset, the masts and yards of the multitudinous shipping traced in intense black on the blazing sheet of the sky.

Now we behold Ceylon, the cinnamon isle. We

all meant to go our several ways, to meet at a week's end on board the yacht. I had an invitation, from my own family friend Dr. Trimen, to stay at his bungalow in the famous Peradeniya Gardens, of which he is director. Gardens are a passion with me—the others cared for different things.

I was called at six o'clock; boat at 6.55 to catch the morning train. Herries got me a carriage and accompanied me to the station, and took my ticket, as he knew the tongue.

The fine artificial lake that somewhat cools Colombo is alive with geese and boats, and fringed with people of every hue, clothed with every colour, or altogether unclothed; washing, standing, dipping, boating; boats and geese all making for a coco-nut isle in the centre. On the other side of the road, opposite this lake, is a swamp with lotuses, where Herries has seen lots of cobras in his time.

The natives love travelling by train, taking their holidays in that way. The Kandyan Railway pays as well as any in the world. It has absolutely paid its expenses and is quite clear. Its whole cost, amounting to two-and-a-half millions sterling, was paid by the colony within twenty-five years, and it is now the free property of the Ceylon government. This line, with the sea-side and Náwalapitiya branches, covers one hundred and twenty miles.

Oh, what sights to eyes which have seen nothing but sea and sky for days! I revel in gay colours, palms and plantains so vividly green, with the young central leaf like a sulphur-yellow flame. What vegetation! crimson hibiscus and the 'flame

of the forest,' allainanda and lantana; swamps covered with lilies, and white domes rising above the bowers of coco-palm, and cinnamon, 'the wealth, the fame, and beauty of Ceylon;' ponds, rivers, and flooded rice-fields. My unaccustomed eye cannot see a quarter of it. A steep incline and a bridge over a river with logs floating down, the banks crowded by picturesque figures in turbans and long checked-cotton skirts; the land, absolutely laughing with cultivation, is tufted with areca clumps and groves of coco. The country is all one emerald. Truly the island is, as the Siamese call it, Lanka, 'the resplendent.'

Adam's Peak, blue in the distance, is the loftiest of a chain of peaks. Now the nearer forest-grown hills gather round and shut it from the view, bringing the bright blossoms of the temple-tree and vinea to light up the dense shade of forest-trees, hung with a cordage of lianas, the pretty pink Honolulu creeper wreathing the lesser trees. There are frequent clearings in this cultivated jungle. Each cottage stands in its own palm and plantain-grove for shade and food, and pasture for cattle, of which there is plenty of all colours and sorts, buffaloes for work in the paddy-fields, and humped bullocks to draw the matting-covered waggons. The ground is chiefly red or tawny, with black mud in the rice swamps.

As we enter the hill-country the vegetation somewhat changes in its character, though still the wild wayside flowers are all West Indian, and the most characteristic trees and shrubs are all foreign-

ers. This is a peculiarity of Ceylon's vegetation ; one wonders what could have been the original flora of the island, for the great majority of the trees and plants here have been introduced by man, and that within recent historical periods. The temple-tree, *Plumeria acutifolia*, itself is undoubtedly South American, and was probably introduced by the Portuguese, who first came to Java in 1496—four years after the discovery of America—and to Ceylon in 1505. Dr. Trimen mentions that in 1520 Magellan sailed direct from South America to the Philippines, and American plants were at once introduced there. It was from these islands that the other eastern tropics obtained many of the plants now so abundant. That extraordinary weed from the New World, the lantana, which abounds here as well as in the Malay peninsula, seems to be a recent introduction ; it quickly overpowers all lesser plants in the open ground.

As the forest becomes less dense, losing some of its jungle-like character, the scenery of piled-up rocks, peaks, roads, torrent-beds, and bridges becomes more visible ; and white clouds wrapping the loftiest mountains with their white lace veil. Adam's Peak, seven thousand three hundred and fifty-three feet high, is bluest of the blue ; though this is not the highest mountain in Ceylon, Pidurntalágala is higher by nearly a thousand feet. The tunneled carriage-road to Kandy winds white below us, fulfilling, even before the railway came, the old Kandyans' prophecy that their conquerors were to be a people who should make a road through a rocky hill.

Breakfast is prepared in the refreshment-car—and most of the passengers take breakfast in the train—and at the stations lovely male creatures, mahogany-coloured, with red, scanty skirts, bring pine-apples, yellow bananas, and green coco-nuts, which they chop deftly with a small sickle, and the liquor spouts up temptingly. Perhaps the most picturesque among the crowd, each one of whom is a study, is a figure leaning on a staff, wearing a greenish turban and crimson-brown patterned drapery, and white skirt with its edge dipped in blue and purple dye.

Still going up-hill, and still beyond the tunnels, the winding road appears, and terraced cultivation of rice among rocky hills; and again the beautiful views of blue mountains are seen in vistas behind the palms and scarlet lantana, with dark-fringed jaggery palms and great rocks in the foreground, looking across rich valleys bounded by chains of blue peaks. Here the railway almost overhangs the precipice. This cliff is called Sensation Rock. Great rocks are scattered about the hill-sides, seamed with grass-edged terraces, and we look down on the tallest areca palms, and across the valley to a lofty, rocky mountain, with its golden-lichened sides furrowed perpendicularly like organ pipes. The vegetation is less profuse up here, but tea is grown on these yellow hills. Below us is the white, winding road, sharply doubling back on itself, and close at hand a gaily-clothed crowd among the red roses and poinsettia blossom at Kaonga-mcawa station, chiefly of men wearing scarlet vests

just as gaudy. I see no women ; but the men make themselves beautiful here, and sport salmon-coloured skirts, green turbans, and Chinese umbrellas. More green caladiums, crops, cows, reeds, and wild sugar-cane ; wet rice-beds being banked up, and buffaloes feeding among the stubble. A sharp curve to the line above the Mahaweli river brings me to Peradeniya station, and a hearty welcome from the director of the famous Peradeniya Gardens. Dr. Trimen's victoria was at the station, and we drove across the satin-wood bridge over the Mahaweli river to the director's bungalow just outside the gardens.

'Boy,' shouts my host, 'boy, bring breakfast ;' and an elegant, full-grown being appears ; a true Cingalese, his long, shining black hair knotted and held back by a circular comb. The men's round combs cost ten rupees ; they are made from the claws of the turtle, on which the spots and markings are actually painted, though the natives do not like the variegated scales of the large shell that we admire so much.

Breakfast at noon. Ceylon tea six years old : tea is all the better, like good wine, for being kept long, if hermetically sealed. This was news to me ; I had heard of the China tea-ships racing home to bring the new season's tea fresh into the market.

I was impatient until the day cooled sufficiently for me to go out and see the wonders of Peradeniya, the paradise of the world, according to Moslem tradition the home provided for Adam and Eve, to console them for the loss of Eden, and, as a gar-

den merely, occupying botanically the first place, now that Kew has become a kind of assistant under-secretary to the Colonial Office, to look after the agricultural department of the colonies.

Here at least was no illusion dispelled : the garden is a Kew palm-stove magnified and glorified ; every tropic tree and plant that I know spindling, drawn up, and skied to hot-house roofs at home, are here displayed in full girth, grace, and development. We entered the gardens by way of a magnificent grove of India-rubber trees which have attained their full size, being about half a century old ; their great sinuous roots, flattened laterally, above ground writhing and meandering, suggest huge saurians ; the roots, grey smooth sides, lighted into silver by the tropic sun, reminded me of the form and colour of the great sea-serpent that I saw in the Indian Ocean. On passing some other tall trees with great buttress-like roots and stems, I was told to note nature's economy of material of wood-formation. Not far from there is a fine specimen of the *Amberstia nobilis*, a splendid temple-tree, with red and yellow flowers in long drooping racemes ; this very handsome tree is in flower all the year round, though blossoming in greatest profusion from December to March.

A specimen that would have passed unobserved had it not been pointed out to me was a bo-tree planted by the Prince of Wales when he was here in 1875, a scrubby little perishing thing that no amount of attention will cause to grow. These royal trees labour under disadvantages in youth, and do not credit to the royal family as gardeners.

The young Princes of Wales, when they were here, laughingly wondered why the Director did not show a better one. This bo-tree is a great contrast to the fine tree growing close to the Director's bungalow, which it shades, and its sharply-pointed leaves on long stems, quivering like the aspen, give a cool rustling, refreshing as the murmur of a fountain. Both of these bo-trees were taken from the sacred bo-tree at Anurádhapura, the ancient capital of Ceylon, which is the oldest historical tree in the world, having been planted 288 B.C. When the King of Siam made a pilgrimage to Anurádhápura on his visit to Ceylon he gilt the branches of this sacred bo-tree.

Dr. Trimen has built a sort of botanical memorial chapel in honour of Dr. Thwaites, his predecessor as director of the gardens. It is built with the characteristic Cingalese crook-backed roof. Dr. Trimen drew the plan on the model of the octagonal Buddhist library temple at Kandy. Some people advised him to build it in Italian style, but this is in better taste here, and the workmen were able easily to construct this form that they understood. On the top of the memorial stone erected in the centre the natives come and offer flowers to the manes of Dr. Thwaites: they always lay flowers on anything like an altar. We smile, but after all the memorial itself has the same meaning.

The bamboos are among the chief glories of the garden. All flesh is grass, but, as in persons there are different degrees, so there are various sorts of grass, from the sweet meadow-hay to the useful

giant bamboo. The yellow stemmed bamboo is native to Ceylon. This gigantic species of the grass tribe is perhaps nowhere seen in greater perfection than at Peradeniya. These golden stems, nine inches in diameter, resemble great organ-pipes and some of them are very resonant. Hearing the wind sighing by its hollow stems one might call this plant an *Æolian* organ.

Most of the stems in this clump are of last year's growth. A patient person may watch them grow half an inch an hour. I can recommend it as an amusement to those of contemplative disposition to sit down and watch the growing stems rise above certain fixed objects. The culms sprout up in the wet season like heads of giant asparagus ; growing at the rate of fully a foot in the twenty-four hours they soon reach their full height of nearly a hundred feet. Slightly larger than this plant is the giant bamboo of Malacca, though the difference is not very marked. These bamboo clumps are beautiful objects reflected in the large pond round which they grow. There is also a male bamboo, with solid stems, very strong and useful, not native to Ceylon, though frequently planted.

The interesting family of palms is well represented here, though there are only three palms peculiar to the island ; the very graceful tufted but spiny katu kitul, the sturdy dotalu, and the slender lénateri ; for Ceylon, with all its luxuriance, is not rich in indigenous palms, well as they grow when once introduced.

Here are the stiff Palmyra palm, the large oil

palm, the great plumed Jaggery palm, and the stately talipot in aloc-like flower, a crown of blossom twenty feet high: a noble palm, the finest of all. It flowers but once, after attaining its full altitude, at an age of between forty and fifty years, and then dies. The ancient Puskola (ola) MSS. in the Buddha monasteries are all written with an iron stylus on narrow strips of talipot palm-leaves boiled and then dried. The date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) never flowers in Ceylon.

There is a grand specimen of the Seychelles palm, the extraordinary Coco-de-mer, or double coco-nut, the largest seed known. This double fruit has been known for centuries by floating out to sea, or being washed up on the shores of Ceylon and the Maldives; but the tree itself was only discovered about one hundred years ago, and it only grows in one or two small islands of the Seychelles group, where it is now protected. It has fine, long-stemmed fan-leaves, only one growing each year. The largest specimen at Peradeniya is about thirty-five years old, and no stem is yet visible, the growth being extremely slow. As Dr. Trimen says this palm frequently attains a height of one hundred feet, it must live to a vast age. The nut takes ten years to ripen, and the seed a year or longer to germinate. It would tax the age and patience of Job to watch the growth of this tree. Near this is the papaw-tree, which I only knew from 'Paul and Virginia.' Most of one's early knowledge of tropical vegetation comes from 'Paul and Virginia.'

A large specimen of the bo-tree was in course

of being grown over and eclipsed by a parasite (*filicium*). All these figs have a parasitic growth, which gradually takes the place of the original tree as this decays. Besides the bo-trees and the great India-rubber-trees (*ficus-elastica*), there are many interesting species of fig-trees in this garden. *Ficus Trimeni*, a sort of banyan, but without the supports to the branches so characteristic of the fig-tree of Bengal, has a tremendous spread, covering a circle of ground over two hundred feet in diameter, a world of shading branches. Dr. Trimen is encouraging some depending shoots of the true banyan (*ficus Bengalensis*) to droop and take root across a carriage-drive, and shade it. This well-known tree is common in the dry districts of India. At Pera-
deniya I see the plan, the *rationale* of tropical vegetation: climbing-plants and jungle-growths, all knit together by the ratan, &c.; the shelter, food, and clothing, the whole life of the people; the whole economy of tropical life, which it is impossible to comprehend in the bewildering forest itself.

The tallest of the fig family (*ficus altissima*) offers in its topmost branches a playground for a number of large fruit-eating bats, or flying-foxes, whose movements are curious to watch. The garden itself is the haunt of numerous squirrels and other harmless animals.

Most, curious among the lianas and other parasites of the tall forest-trees are the rope-like stems of the *dul* (*anodendrum*), twisting like a long snake over other stems; the thorny ratan grappling itself up to the light by its long-hooked tendrils. The

steins of this climbing palm sometimes attain a length of several hundred feet. These are the canes of commerce. The long festoons of bignonia, the dark and handsome climbing arum, and many other creepers stretched across from tree to tree, tangled in strange knots, and twisted in wild, luxuriant confusion, afford a series of densely-shaded pictures that exhaust the mind in attempting to follow the endless variety of the earth's riches, while the exquisite colours that fringe the masses on the borders that the sunshine touches bring before the eyes a vision of hitherto uninagined loveliness.

The fernery is a delightful maze of tropical foliage in various forms and hues. The ground is shaded by lofty trees, and watered by numerous rivulets flowing by side of the shady paths. The tree-trunks are covered with a variety of creepers, orchids, and parasites of most fanciful form and colour. There are fern-houses besides, with tile-roofs and tatties, or sun-blinds. The ferns are planted in bamboo pots, and on porous chatties, where they grow outside and suck up the water. They split the smaller bamboo pots (for cuttings) before planting in them, so that the roots are undisturbed when the plants have to be transplanted. They do not employ Chinese gardeners, good though they be. There is no Chinese element in Ceylon at all; indeed, there is not a Chinaman in the island. They have tried to get a footing in Ceylon, but the Tamils completely undersell them. There are few or no manufactures in Ceylon.

We stood under the fatal upas-tree unscathed.

The foundation for the story of the upas-tree valley of death, in Java, is not the influence of the tree, but of a deadly vapour arising from some springs in its neighbourhood. The upas-tree is harmless enough, though from it is extracted a poison said to owe its properties to the presence of strychnia. The Javanese tree is called *Antiaris toxicaria*; the Ceylon variety of the upas is called *Ant: Innoxia*. There is no perceptible difference between them; both have a tall, straight, slender stem. They are closely allied, if not the same plant.

Among other curious trees are the Chinese weeping-cypress, used at Chinese funerals and planted by their graves—a very graceful, feathery cypress—and the very bright-green rain-tree, the *guango* of South America, much planted in India and Ceylon for shade. But to give a list would catalogue the garden which the whole world has contributed to enrich.

The choice cultivated flowers and foliage-plants in the shelter-houses, (for one cannot call them hot-houses here) come from London, from Bull, Veitch, and others. This reminds me of the Duke of Sutherland's story of his asking for orchids in the West Indies and hearing that their best all came from Trentham.

Phloxes do well, roses not very well; they have constantly to be renewed from England.

'Look at my substitute for lavender;' the Director pointed out a small salvia: 'the best I can do as imitation; the colour exact, but no odour.'

How natural it is that they should best enjoy what

reminds them of home. I knew a retired Member of Council of India who, when he came home to England, enjoyed the wild flowers so rapturously that he liked to plant primroses and other 'weeds' in his wife's magnificent gardens, while she vainly tried to gain his admiration for the superb collection of orchids he had, in the course of years, sent her from India. No, he loved best the wildings that reminded him of his boyhood. There is much that is home-like in Ceylon, especially after seeing Siam. Indeed, England feels like next door when we hear that the quickest mail from London has arrived in fifteen days.

'Doesn't this remind you of an old ivy-grown abbey?' We were walking up a road by a line of tall old tree-trunks that did indeed look like ruined columns, covered as they were with masses of the Burmese thunbergia, whose close-growing polished leaves are so suggestive of ivy, did not its large, pale-blue flowers weaken the illusion. 'We call these the ruins.' I was for examining more closely the pseudo ivy-grown banks, when the Director advised me not to stray far into the thickets. 'We have done our best to extirpate the numerous cobras from the more frequented parts of the gardens, but they are found just here perhaps more often than anywhere else.' I kept strictly to the paths after this hint, which so strongly reminded me of the presence of serpents even in Paradise.

Near here was a singular flower called *Napoleonia imperialis*, with blossoms growing curiously back against the stem, of buff, purple, and cream-white;

more like a sea-anemone than an imperial crown. The nutmegs are not quite ripe, the mace enclosing them is as yet a delicate pink, shading off into white. The fragrant allspice is agreeable as you crush the leaves. These spice-trees form a dark evergreen bower, meeting across the walks. Near there are the jack-fruit and the durian growing out at once from the stout timber stems and branches of full-grown trees; and likewise the wild bread-fruit, of the same family as the jack, a tree useful for house, food, and clothing, and for many conveniences besides.

Early hours are kept here: the first breakfast is never later than seven o'clock. In the night I heard the noise of an animal; I thought it was in my room. I thought of the stuffed 'pantherette' downstairs that Dr. Trimen had shot close by; could it be a beast of this sort that had climbed up a tree, leapt on to the shingle verandah-roof, and in at my open window? I kept my shuddering as little audible as I could, not wanting to direct attention to myself. All the books I had been reading lately pointed in the direction of alarm. I heard lapping of water, and thought the creature had got at the water-jug. I felt like Jack-o'-the-Beanstalk when the giant, snuffing about, utters the awful words, 'Fe fi fo fum.' Silence again, and I began to hope the creature had gone out of window the way he came. Next morning I found it was Dr. Trimen's little dog, Charlie, woolly-white and aged, who was in the habit of making night hideous with his wanderings and his asthma. We had home-grown coffee as well as tea

for breakfast, for, though the coffee hand is considered played out in Ceylon, they still grow a little Liberian coffee. I mentioned meeting a train full of tea.

‘Yes,’ said the Director, ‘harvesting goes on at all seasons pretty nearly. Tea is a very long-suffering tree, it always responds. Ceylon is just the country for a tree grown for its leaves. They nearly strip the tree, and young buds shoot out almost immediately. In many ways the tea cultivation has been a great boon to Ceylon. Since we have taken to tea, the fashion for heavy drinking is gone out. Fashion in things is greater than any moral force: people in India drink less than they did; they take fewer pick-me-ups.’

‘It is the fashion everywhere to take less, I fancy.’

‘Yes, and besides that the Ceylon planters are poorer since their losses in the coffee plantations.’

Tea did not find such ready favour among them at first as a substitute for coffee-cultivation, because it required preparation; besides, the forests were too lavishly cut down in the clearings, and now the planters find they have to pay high for wood to dry their tea. They planted the coffee too exclusively, and the mysterious blight fell upon it; proving, according to the universal experience, that it is not good for one vegetable to grow alone.

The early morning was deliciously cool and fresh with the breeze blowing down from the blue mountains round, and with the morning flowers all out that wither in the noontide. We went for a long walk round the grounds, shrivelling the sensitive plant

as we walked across the dewy turf, our footsteps causing a blackened train of blight to fall on the turf covered with this tender lilac-tasselled grass, whose very stems as well as leaflets shrink from our touch. The river is low from the drought, for the season has been unusually dry. With heavy rain there is sometimes as much as twenty-four feet difference in one night in the height of the river.

‘Here is my farmyard.’

The Director showed me with justifiable pride his pretty calves and numerous cows that supply him with milk and fresh butter every morning; real luxuries in the tropics. Here are likewise some cincus from Australia.

From this we went to the building which was originally the Director’s bungalow, and which—so like a man—he has turned into a museum, and to the herbarium, where are kept the collection of dried plants and drawings of Ceylonese plants by a native who is kept always employed in drawing and painting from the plants, which he does remarkably well, this sort of flower-painting being eminently adapted to native notions of art. Another native is constantly at work drying and preparing the plants and sticking them into books.

The economic value of these gardens to the planters is very great, teaching them what they can or cannot profitably grow. Planters bring their troubles, too, to the Director, and their invalid coco-trees, blights, mildews, and what not. One of these houses is a kind of hospital for diseased plants. Besides tea and cacao, cinchona is now so

largely planted in Ceylon that the price has gone down. The bark is often only twopence a pound, and at that price does not pay the cost of peeling. Quinine, which used to sell at fourteen shillings the ounce, is now sold at one shilling and threepence. The market for it is entirely ruled by Ceylon. Directly the planters think they can make a little money, they throw a million pounds into the market and down the prices go again.

In the afternoon we drove to Kandy, a pleasant drive of four miles. We went to the Queen's Hotel to call on the Duke and hear his plans for the week.

We went on to see the Art Museum, got up by Dr. Trimen and a few gentlemen of Kandy, where curios are collected, and the natives are encouraged to copy the old manufactures for sale.

We went to the library and reading-room by the lake, a very comfortable institution, then to the famous Temple of the Tooth : the 'Dalada' or tooth of Buddha. The temples here are comparatively plain, as is natural for the places of worship in what is like a reformed Buddhism. In Thibet and Siam Buddhism is a ritual; in Ceylon it is merely a philosophy.

The Temple of the Tooth is Indian in style, in its Cingalese development: some of it is of late date, and some of it much earlier. It is surrounded by a cloister curiously painted with the Buddhist Inferno in all manner of Dantesque designs,—like the frescoes of the middle ages. The tooth itself could not be seen, as it is only exhibited once a year. If the Duke of Sutherland asked especially to see it, it

would be shown, but he had seen it before, when here with the Prince of Wales, and none of us cared much about it. Dr. Trimen believes the Buddha tooth to be simply a bit of ivory; but, if it is a tooth at all, it is most likely that of a creature called the dugong, something like the West Indian manatee (*Helicore dugong*). The flesh of this herbivorous mammifer is greatly superior to that of the green turtle.

We went up an external winding flight of stone stairs to see the library where the famous Buddhist records are kept, written on talipot palm-leaves all strung together and held by chased silver backs, handsome and very precious; these were shown to us by a shaven-headed yellow-robed priest. Gautama, the Buddha, spoke Magadhi, the language of the kingdom of Magadha, now called Behar. As containing the sacred books of the Buddhists it is called Pali 'row, series.' These Pali writings and records are called ola books. This octagonal building, which has the Kaudyan crook-backed roof, is the same that Dr. Trimen copied for the Thwaites memorial in the Peradeniya Gardens. The views of and from this temple are truly delightful, situated as it is overhanging the moat and artificial lake, bordered with open-worked stone balustrading of quaint pattern, that gives charm and coolness to Kandy.

We went to the Court of Justice, where we admired the old carved wood pillars, of the squared tapering form so peculiarly Cingalese, with carved capitals. The Kandyans of old had a genius for carpentry. Thence we went to the bright and pretty Pavilion Gardens, the private grounds of

the Governor of Ceylon, now away on leave. Above these gardens rise the densely-shaded hills intersected with winding pathways, one of which is called Lady Horton's walk, that lead to a summit giving a fine view of Kandy and its charming situation in a valley surrounded by hills of varied outline; the distant peaks blue with forests, the nearer slopes broken and agreeably diversified, but mostly green and smiling, and reflected in the glassy lake. We wound up our promenade by going to the pretty English church to hear a special Lent sermon by the Archdeacon, a great friend of Dr. Trimen's.

We had a pleasant drive back to Peradeniya by moonlight, the white road crowded by swarthy Cingalese out enjoying the air, and still blacker Tamils who, by their continual immigrations from Southern India, have driven the Cingalese southward in the island.

We ate bread-fruit at dinner instead of potatoes. It eats something like mashed potato, only more insipid. Dr. Trimen took pains that I should taste and try the various native fruits and vegetables; the monster pineapples, full of juice, were the best of any.* We took our coffee in the verandah, where we sat talking of mutual friends and relations as we enjoyed the cool air and fire-fly-studded shade. There were comparatively few fire-flies, because of the unusual drought, also no reptiles. I was glad of the latter, though it was another dispelled illusion. I had read of the multitudes of cobras in Ceylon, and I had seen none save the tame one belonging to the conjuror in Colombo.

* Note C. Appendix.

‘We must bring you in a cobra to keep up the credit of the country,’ said my host. ‘They always know where to lay their hands on a cobra when they want one.’

A few days ago a cobra crawled under Dr. Trimen’s writing-table ; he told his ‘boy’ to kill it when it had crept under the matting. The ‘boy’ slew it, saying it was a low-caste cobra. They will not usually kill cobras—though they are very easily slain—as they are in some sort sacred animals. They speak of the Director’s dog as a high-caste dog. The natives at once distinguish the difference of the caste of white people, and call an ill-bred Englishman a pariah gentleman. The philosophic Buddhist condemns caste distinctions. ‘A man,’ he says, ‘is whatever caste he makes himself.’ Deeds are the test of caste to the Buddhist, as birth is to the Brahmin. The respectable father of a family, whom Dr. Trimen calls ‘boy,’ or ‘bhoy,’ is the principal servant in the house. I gather from the Anglo-Indian dictionary that boy must be an old Sanscrit word. A lad is called sinallo boy.

Were it not for the insects, nothing could be more delightful than to sit thus, at morn or dewy eve, in the entrance porch, shaded by tatties and surrounded by flowers of crimson hibiscus. ‘That’s a nice bit of colour, plain red and yellow, none of your gaudy colours.’ The sand-flies—‘poochies’ is their name for troublesome insects of all kinds—do not worry one so much while reading or talking with a hand free, but once sit down to write or

draw and they show themselves determined foes to literature and art.

We are not so much troubled by mosquitoes—as in Malaya, at least; and leeches have not sought my life: I have seen none. This, they tell me, is because of the dry weather, but I know a lady who spent six months on a tea plantation in Ceylon without finding a single leech. The men digging showed me a queen white ant, a 'hen white ant,' the 'boy' calls it. They have dug up an ants' nest, and the natives eat the queen ants as a delicacy. The little head and legs look so funny struggling out of that enormous body. It suggests to one a little man encumbered with a great position. Dr. Trimen says it is very unpleasant when, after a shower of rain, an ants' nest is disturbed; the ants rise in a cloud like smoke and come in myriads into the houses, covering everything, and rise again, shedding their wings like dew.

An old steel areca-nut cutter was brought round to see if Dr. Trimen, who often buys curiosities, would purchase it. They have no clue to the reason of our likings, except that we like what is old, and, the more apparently useless it is, the better we seem to like it. They must look upon us as very daft. Whatever rubbish they have by them they bring round to try to sell; sometimes, as on the present occasion, it happens to be the wrong thing, and they depart melancholy and mystified. The finely-wrought, silver-mounted native knives are now becoming scarce. There is little of the native engraved brass-work now to be had, but it

can always be made to order; and if they are not hurried the natives will work it now as finely as ever.

On Palm Sunday morning, after breakfasting at six, we had a truly delightful drive into Kandy to the first service, at a quarter-past seven, at the neat and pretty church. The cool of the morning here is the perfection of climate, and to me the whole of the road is interesting, from the elegant entrance-gates of the Botanic Gardens, shaded by a grove of choice palms, near which the women of the village are always sitting by the roadside with open baskets of grain for sale to casual passers-by, through the road bordered by strange trees which are a continual delight to me, to the bright and pleasant village suburbs of Kandy, where many Portuguese customs and fashions in building still remain, and houses with pillared fronts and lofty steps up to our old-fashioned porticos. It is singular that while, as in Siam, many memorials linger in Ceylon of Portuguese rule in words and local laws, few or no traces exist of the Dutch settlement here, except the coco-groves of the shore.

In Ceylon is seen the Aryan village life in all its fulness. The head-man rules, and doubtless taxes the people, and probably bullies them; but they are less taxed than formerly. To them there is otherwise little difference between our rule and that of the native kings: they still have their paddy-fields in common. The reason of this is that they must all share in common the water-supply that overflows their fields. The sowing of the rice

in the flooded fields is perhaps one meaning of 'Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.' One supply of water serves the whole valley full of terraces. It is the one thing the natives are clever in, utilising the water-supply for agriculture, and this they probably learnt of the Arabs, who introduced the coffee, whose descendants are the Moormen of the towns. A channel is dug on each side of the field in case of an overflooding by rain.

Rice for the priests' food is placed in bowls by the wayside. They have such a strict vow of poverty that even the yellow robe, their only possession, is torn up and sewn again to make it valueless as a piece of stuff. The Buddhist priest's yellow robe is supposed to be woven, dyed, torn, and sewn up and made all in one day. The superior priests often wear satin and fine silk robes; they should not, as silk cannot be obtained without destroying life, so it is not lawful for the priests. They are supposed to hold a palm-leaf fan before their face always, as they may not look at anyone, especially not at a woman. Like other priesthoods, they do not strictly keep their rule.

We passed a very fat priest who did not look as if he lived on the leavings of other people's rice. We met picturesque groups carrying flowers and offerings covered with white handkerchiefs to the temple, and a procession of country people with temple offerings, young coco-nuts, palms, &c., accompanying a priest from one village to another.

We saw some Siamese nuns: there is a colony of

them here. I did not hear of these nuns in Siam. After church we called on the Duke, who had given up the idea of going to Nuwara Elya, fearing the cold of its high elevation. Mr. Cobham has returned from Nuwara Elya (City of Light.) He is disappointed with it: 'Oh, dear no, it is nothing near to Darjeeling.' The English love the place so much because there they find the home-flowers, and by their firesides they can almost fancy themselves in England. Of course we did not yet want to do that. Mr. Cobham finds Kandy more amusing.

As the Governor of Ceylon was away on leave, there were no receptions and ceremonials, which made life easier for the Duke, who wished to rest and recruit quietly after the fatigues of Siam and Malaya. The Kandyan chiefs, however, insisted on welcoming him, and came to meet him at the Temple of the Tooth in full costume of necklaces and many voluminous petticoats. Full dress takes this form in Ceylon as well as in Europe. The Duke made them a pretty speech, which Mr. Neville interpreted perhaps prettier. They seemed to like it.

We went to Nata-dewali, formerly a Tamil temple, now Bhuddist. This is a cluster of wooden temples and white stone dagobas gathered in a grove on the shore-side of the road by the lake. In the temple precincts is a large bo-tree, planted originally as a slip from the sacred tree at Anurādhapura.

The views all round the lake with its charming island, on which are still some remains of the harem of the native Kings of Kandy, and the varied temple architecture grouped about its shores, afford a series

of tempting scenes to the sketcher. Kandy abounds in such scenery. We lunched at Mr. Neville's pretty and charmingly-situated bungalow by the lake. He has a perfect museum of Cingalese curios, antiquities, and treasure of natural history. He is the editor of the *Taprobanian*, a scientific and archæological paper full of connoisseurship, which he writes from cover to cover. We sat down only three to luncheon, though the Cingalese 'boy' laid the table for four, according to their custom. Even if one person is dining alone, they lay covers for four. Dr. Trimen had arranged a pic-nic in the gardens for the Duke and his party, but the much-needed rain came down and spoiled the day for us. However, his Grace came out another day instead, and enjoyed the grounds, hearing all about everything of interest from the Director, and gaining, as he always tries to do, hints for home improvements. The intelligent peon who attended us is in the habit of conducting people round the gardens. As he knows the Director's guide-book off by heart, people mostly remark, 'What an intelligent guide, he knows the names of all the plants !'

Dr. Trimen accompanied the Duke in a drive round, by the now full and *café-au-lait* coloured river, the Mahawelyganga, which surrounds the gardens on all sides except the south, where they are bounded by the high road. This river, the largest in Geylon, the Ganges of Ptolemy's maps, is about one hundred and fifty miles long, and falls into the sea at Trincomalee on the east coast. The vignette views from the gardens, of the river embowered in foliage,

are enchanting, especially that seen near the place where we took our tea, where the Mahaweli is crossed by the satin-wood bridge of a single span ; an enchanting view framed in light tresses of bamboo. ' Almost equal to Darjeeling, I fancy ; ' the Duke glanced at Mr. Cobham.

There was a lovely moonlight after the rain. Fire-flies hovered thickly about the large mango-tree before the lawn, and the great bo-tree near the house was a beautiful object, dropping showers of rain off its pointed pendulous leaves quivering in the breeze, while a multitude of fire-flies lit it up into a fountain of luminous sparks.

Dr. Trimen one day ordered a *chaise-à-porteurs* with four coolies to carry me to see some temples at about six or seven miles from here. There is a fine group of temples within a radius of half-a-dozen miles or so. Gadaladeniya is the chief one we are going to see ; then if we have time, and it is practicable, we shall see Lankatilakawihara, called the most striking Buddhist temple. The temples of Einbekke and Wegiriya are within three miles of these. We talked about the temples and read about them in the guide-book, but I do not think we really saw any of these, as there is such a muddle with the names ; no two people call them alike.

At three o'clock the carriage came round and we started for Galangoda (? Gadaladeniya). We drove as far as we could, and then turned off to the by-path where the coolies were waiting. They hoisted my chair on their shoulders by long bamboo poles ; I felt like the Pope must feel when thus carried.

The uneven ground made it difficult to balance the chair, and once they let me fall; chair and all; luckily it was a piece of turfy ground where I fell, and I was soon mounted again. The bearers were Cingalese, who bore the bamboo-poles on their shoulders, Tamils would have carried them on their heads, thus I had the less far to drop. Fortunately too for me, they did not spill me over into the newly-sown paddy swamps, lying deep below the path. A train full of coolies was once upset into the paddy-fields, where they were nearly all suffocated.

On turning the angles of a dark frowning basaltic rock, the white temple of Galangoda appeared as a surprise. It is in style Indian Renaissance, quite modern, and dazzling in the whiteness and newness of its European-looking columns and mouldings. It is built in two stories above the ground-floor, which also is led up to by a flight of steps. There is something to be learnt from the love of semi-savage nations for the Renaissance, in white marble or white-wash. Internally the nave, with its four massive octagonal pillars and round arches, resembles the crypt of a Christian church. It is painted in the primitive colours and green, with figures and patterns, thus: flesh unmitigated red, clothing green or yellow, skies blue, trees green. There is an ambulatory round this painted shrine.

A staircase, in the chancel, led to an upper temple, to which they would not let us ascend without taking off our shoes, a ceremonial that Dr. Trimen has never known required during his residence in Ceylon; but here they made even the

Governor of Ceylon take his boots off. I did not mind, as in these warm climates it is a comfort to take off one's shoes and walk on the stone pavement in thin stockings.

The wall-paintings along the corridors are very Byzantine in style and colour. The shrine of the upper temple is very rich in costly treasures. The fine gilt-bronze dagoba here protected by a strong metal cage, was seen in the Kandyan portion of the Ceylon court at the Colonial Exhibition. Candles were lighted, that we might examine the jewels and the very fine chased work in silver-gilt on the dagoba within the cage, and the brass and silver bo-trees growing by it, representing a grove. A common green-glass ball (sacred, I presume, or else representing the sun) is hung above these treasures among the elegant golden lotus-flowers suspended above the dagoba, and spreading like a firmament of spherical leaves and blossoms. Several small figures of Buddha, in gold or silver, in the three positions—seated, standing, or reclining—are disposed about. On the surrounding brass lamps are figures of cocks. The ceilings are painted with Buddhas seated in meditation. Near the shrine are numerous life-sized figures in painted plaster. 'This face belongs to a priest living now,' was said of one of these figures, a portrait-model. Not flattering, I should imagine.

We were able to converse with the priests, as we had the Director's 'boy' with us, as well as the intelligent peon. They showed us an ivory Buddha, carved, they said, out of elephants' bones, and

a Burmese Buddha in white marble, looking very different to any of the others—calmer, or, at any rate, smoother.

Red lilies are chief among the floral offerings. This again is unusual in a Buddhist temple. 'Plenty books,' they tell us; and show us some ola books inscribed on papyrus of the talipot palm. The wall-paintings in the upper-front corridor are amusing. A central picture of elephants cantering up Adam's Peak, with offerings to the foot-print, is very comical, as are a series of scenes in the Buddhist inferno: one of a victim having his teeth taken out with red-hot tongs by blue-devils. There is a great connection between tooth-ache and blue-devils. Demon-worship, or propitiation of what might do them harm, was the original superstition in Ceylon, and still has a far greater hold on the people than Buddhism. A black band painted round the coco-trees is a charm against the evil eye.

The different vices are variously treated in this inferno. A hunting-man is being torn to pieces by blue dogs. I suppose he is a type of cruelty: a huntsman would naturally be held chief of sinners by Buddhists. On the wall here is a picture of the great precipitous rock outside this temple, and of people leaping off the rock into lions' mouths. This was explained to be Buddha giving himself to be devoured by the starving tiger. If so, he had followers, and tigers in his day had no stripes.

In a large side-chapel is a colossal reclining Buddha, nineteen yards long. The figure is painted

red. One calculation makes this Buddha forty feet long. We measured it, and found it nineteen yards long (fifty-seven feet). The walls of this large room, which is nearly filled with the great red Buddha, are painted all over with yellow-clad priests, each bearing a flower for an offering. Strewn on the long console below the gigantic Buddha were roses, yellow lignonias, and red vallota-lilies, the blossoms of the temple-tree, of course, and the areca fruit, looking like green ears of some cereal.

Galangoda is the only two-storied temple that Dr. Trimen has ever seen here. From a drawing one would never guess what part of the world the temple belonged to ; it is such a curious jumble of whitewashed Renaissance and Hindoo, yet with a difference to both. Water flows from the tall, dark rock which shelters the temple.

The Buddhist priests here, and our followers, look on the Director and myself as extremely religious persons, who take a great deal of trouble to visit the temples.

The Director, the intelligent peon, and the 'boy' botanise all along the road. Our followers and the country people here all know the names of their plants ; so unlike our yokels, who can recognise few, and others who know none. They call Dr. Trimen 'the great flower-master.'

There was another small temple, and a sharply-pointed dagoba, situated likewise under a rock in the valley below us, visible between the graceful palms and slim stems of the areca-palms spiring up steep hill-sides ; and, farther on, we examined a

small temple painted outside with life-sized elephants. This is scarcely more than a way-side chapel, though a great resort of pilgrims. Near this latter temple is a newly-planted bo-tree brought from Anurádhapura.

Lady-day is about the longest day here, or rather just now are their longest evenings. To-day (28th of March) it is daylight till nearly seven p.m. The moonlight played beautifully on the river, and on the pearly masses of cloud that had hardly yet lost the rose-flush of sunset; and, on our road home, we could distinguish the gay colours worn by a crowd of people surrounding a sacred elephant, one belonging to the temple at Kandy: we could even see its faint white markings. More than usually exquisite was the view of the blue mountains beyond the dark satin-wood bridge, and the olive-hued reflections of the palm-groves by the river.

This delicious island has been a dream, an oasis of rest.

I left Peradeniya early next morning, with a feeling of more than thankfulness for the repose it had been to me. Dr. Trimen accompanied me to Colombo. We joined the Duke and his party at Peradeniya junction and journeyed down together. It is seventy miles to Colombo, the rail a single line, broad gauge six feet six inches. Cow-catchers are attached to the engines; they catch many cows, as so many half-starving bullocks stray on the line. We ascend a hundred feet and then comes a rapid descent, an incline of one in forty-five, for twelve miles. Here we cross the water-shed, whence the

Mahaweli river flows down to the Bay of Trincomalee. The country is like a relief map as we run along the dizzy verge of the Sensation Rock. Yonder is a rocky peak on a hill, looking like a Rhenish castle, this and the table-shaped mass called the Bible Rock remain long visible, through clusters of scarlet erythrina, as we wind round the hill.

'It doesn't stand the test?' said we to Mr. Cobham.

'No, certainly not equal to Darjeeling.'

This damped us, but Dr. Trimen said that Darjeeling, though grand, has only one view, while Ceylon has a great variety.

'To look at the country from here,' Dr. Trimen said, 'you might think it almost inhabited, but it is one mass of little villages; wherever you see that white tree there is sure to be a house; it is the oil-tree. But now kerosine is hawked about throughout the country: thus the local industries are dying out everywhere.'

Except what Dr. Trimen gives unofficially, there is little teaching afforded as to the use of many of the native trees, nor encouragement to manufacture hitherto unknown articles. The Indian forestry officials are rather red-tape-tied.

Tamil workmen were roofing a shed with platted palm-leaves, the fringed edges forming a loose-looking thatch. They use these coarsely-platted palm-leaves for fencing, shading, and for rough baskets. There are few other manufactures even of this inferior kind. They are entirely an agricultural people.

Seeing no capacity among the people now-a-days for manufactures, one marvels at the Kandyan

carpentry in the Buddhist library and the Hall of Justice in the former native capital.

Here at Polgawhela station is one of the few women I have seen travelling about ; she wears a pretty silver ornament in her hair, but this is of Indian manufacture. Nearly all the names of the stations are taken from trees. Pol is the coco-nut-tree. Here are a lot of Salvation Army people wearing red cotton shirts with yellow inscriptions, and red turbans, salmon-coloured cotton skirts, and scarfs. The costume is picturesque on a native, but the English enthusiasts wear just the same, 'bare feet and all. Other men in equally lively costumes come round offering caroomba, young coco-nut.

'All your stations seem called the same name,' says a griffin, who has heard caroomba cried at all the stations.

They bring round pastry, too, made of wheaten flour, which is always called American flour. This is a thing quite unknown in the island, except near the towns.

Dr. Trimen supplies all the gay station gardens with flowers gratis. He is well-known along the line, as, besides Peradeniya and the pretty pavilion flower-garden at Kandy, he has the control of the branch botanical establishments at Hakgala, a temperate garden, situated at an elevation of five thousand eight hundred feet, adapted to the cultivation of European and Australian plants, and those of tropical mountain regions ; at Anarádhapura, the ancient capital of Ceylon, ninety miles north of Kandy, possessing a dry climate with a short rainy

season, suited to the growth of tropical plants and crops that are intolerant of continuous atmospheric moisture ; and at Henaratgoda, a steaming tropical garden not far from Colombo.

The names of the stations are written up in Cingalese, Tamil, and English. The Cingalese use round, the Tamils square characters ; both read from left to right, like all the Aryan languages. Here is Mirigama, written මිරිගම, vowels, especially *a*, being understood, the *i*'s are combined with the consonants. We fall to talking of philology ; each of us has a nice little theory, of course, but it does not agree with the facts of the case.

The Tamil coolies have a system of names entirely their own. If you lose your way it is no use knowing the real name of the place you want to find, as the Tamil names are entirely different. Mr. Jones, say, opened an estate, these Tamil immigrants will call it Jonistohun, whereas it may now be owned by a Mr. Smith, and the English owner perhaps calls it Abbotsham. The stations are covered with English advertisements.

What a wonderful garden it is all the way, and just the same all the year round : a monotony of richness ; only now the buffaloes are ploughing the paddy mud. Here are the remains of former cinnamon gardens, and here is the broad Colombo river, the Kelaniganga, and here are fishermen, wearing their very large thick hats. They are above their knees in water for hours, and need to have the head protected. It is intensely hot here at the sea-level. Here is the fishermen's church :

the fisher population round the coast are Roman Catholics to a man. Their trade is scorned by the Buddhists. They give to the church a tithe of all the fish they catch. The Roman Catholic priests here are mostly Italians.

To our surprise there was no one at the station to meet us: but Dr. Trimen helped us to get a bullock waggon, covered with platted palm-leaves, for the luggage, and it was sent down to the quay under the care of Bertha and Dark Charlie, travelling in a carriage keeping it in view.

Dr. Trimen took me for a drive round Galle Face, by the sapphire sea curling in on the sands with its fresh sea-smells, on a smooth road shaded by bright green lettuce-trees and the yellow hibiscus, called by the English tulip-tree. We came in sight of the favourite Mount Lavinia Hotel, and then drove round outside the town by the cinnamon gardens, the plumbago works, the breezy lake, and the road between groves and gardens where the villas and bungalows of English gentlemen and rich merchants are mostly situated.

The plumbago or graphite is the only mineral of commercial importance exported from Ceylon. The mining industry is entirely in the hands of the Cingalese, who work it in a primitive fashion even as deep as three hundred feet. This is the finest plumbago in the world for crucible purposes, and this valuable trade has sprung up entirely within the last forty years.

Here in the East we do not feel as we often do on the Continent that the English are ages behind other nations.

We sat awhile in the cool, covered pier waiting for a boat to the yacht ; none being forthcoming, we wondered whose business it was to look after the harbour. The people here seemed only to want to look on. The pier-master's business is 'to wallop all these people and to loaf about.' The Duke's letter to his steward had by some oversight not been sent on board the yacht, so there was no one to meet us and no boats were waiting. On our return from bespeaking lunch at the hotel by chits for 'chickeny stew,' hashed chicken and 'hairy stew,' jugged hare—Mr. Cobham being interviewed on the way by people connected with the rival newspapers eager to get copy from him—we heard a rumour of his Grace being obliged to go out to his own yacht in a casual catamaran.

'Forbid it, ye powers !' we exclaimed, and Dr. Trimen used his knowledge of the language to avert such a catastrophe. The casual catamaran would have been named after the Duke of Sutherland at once.

We went to the hotel to tiffin. Dr. Trimen seemed to know everybody, and we all met acquaintances. One is sure to meet somebody one knows in this Clapham Junction of the East. Herries and our bos'un in dashing mufti passed through the hotel corridor looking about them cool and critical as if about to rent the premises ; *ergo*, Herries and the bos'un were not on board. I went out and spoke them returning. They were thunderstruck ! having heard nothing of our coming. At once 'there was a rush ; the boatswain flew off to his boats, Herries became completely the steward again, and hurried

off to buy up all Colombo market and bring it off. Meanwhile, instead of weighing anchor for England at three o'clock as the Duke intended doing, we fell a prey to all the pertinacious jewellers, and merchants of moonstones, and ivory elephants, and tortoiseshell catamarans in Colombo.

The yacht itself was in the lively condition of being upset for cleaning: odours of soft soap prevailed above the cinnamon breezes, and we all fell over rolls of carpet. Dr. Trimen had been invited to look over the yacht, and as a preliminary, as Herries had the cabin-keys in his pocket, the carpenter was called forward to unhang the deck-house doors, and we boarded the ship burglariously. We had just read a most flowery description of the *Sans Peur* headed 'A Floating Palace of Delight,' and—here was another illusion dispelled.

At sundown the steward appeared in command of a broad native boat with his live-stock: two sheep, six turkeys, myriads of fowls, baskets of eggs, fish, fruit, and vegetables enough to have left Colombo hungry many days after our departure.

We soon, perhaps too soon, got shipshape—for there was nothing left to grumble at, and for example's sake one ought to be calm as a Buddha.

The most useful thing any of us bought at Colombo was a pack of cards. This, after all the crying up of Colombo as the place to buy choice stuffs and curios in! Never tell me of the East; London is the place of all others to do your shopping. I have lost my reckoning of dispelled illusions by this time.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RETURN VOYAGE.

Summer redundant. Blueness abundant—
Beauty the world, yet a blank all the same.

BROWNING.

We dread the long return passage across the Indian Ocean. We have tried it. It is a popular fallacy that the world is small. It is not; it is too big by far—at sea.

A long sea-passage is the opportunity for squaring the circle, or doing anything that one has never yet found time to do. We played patience with the new pack of cards. From heat to heat the day declined.

We sentimentalized over the outward-bound Messageries steamer, and over our last glimpse of India; the distant ghauts half-veiled in pearl-lighted clouds and grey by distance, which greys all life as time does, and we are sailing forward into the golden sunset—homewards, homewards—through a sea blue as the sapphires of Ceylon. Tender rose light, like a memory, hangs over the distance which hides Ceylon itself, the isle of pearls and gardens. The deep purple edge of the sea keen as a knife

along the bright still glowing cornelian colour of the lower western sky. The western blaze flamed on until the full moon rose behind us, a moon so bright that it seemed literally to scorch us with its light.

We passed between the Maldives, the thousand isles, very distant, and the nearer Laccadives to starboard, very low and flat, like a thick black line in the water, pointed with a lighthouse. This near flat island is Minicon: we passed through the eight degrees channel. Ah, the birds seen to-day were inhabitants of these islands.

The natural history of these islets must be interesting, rich with jetsam and flotsam from so many shores, yet so isolated.

' In Maldiv Islands, in the deep sea lies
A plant of sovereign power by waters fed,
Whose fruit strong poison's influence to prevent
Is held an antidote most excellent.*

Dinner was laid on a small table on deck in picnic style, pleasant for us all. We made an institution of this.

Good Friday: the minah bird died, and so did the beautifully-coloured parrots that the Duke was taking home to her Grace. The mongoose, out without leave one night cruising about the ship, frightened the poor birds: this or a spell of rough weather destroyed them, we scarcely know which.

The second cook made us hot cross-buns for breakfast.

An immense shoal of fish is being pursued by birds. Now they have sheered off and the fish are

* CAMOENS.

splashing about very jolly, taking their morning tub.

This sea-travelling induces a curious mixture of laziness and restlessness. Our diaries are chiefly a meteorological record. Our chief sport, besides the game of 'patience,' was playing with the monkeys. The thrumming of the screw prevents writing, except on one's lap, and there is little to write about, and no post-office in reach for many a long day. One's drawings, with the throbbing of the screw and the bobbing of the ocean, suffer a sea-change into something very strange. It is a clear drop down to the South Pole, so there is no scenery to draw; besides which there is considerable motion in the Indian Ocean: The clock is put back twenty minutes each day, so hard are we running after the untireable sun. It is too hot in the saloon to sit at the piano, and the damp of Siam put it horribly out of tune. The nights are long hours of lassitude and heat, but, taking it altogether, we do not find the return journey quite so trying as we feared. Though we have used up the new books and are thrown upon Shakespeare and Scott and the 'Sailing Directory,' 'patience' is a powerful resource.

The first of April was Easter Sunday. We were still at sea, day by day steaming westward into the sunset. A flying-fish flew in at the Duke's port-hole through the long ventilator and all, he deserved the Queen's prize for the fine shot; another flew through Lady Clare's port right across to her wardrobe. Poissons d'Avril. We called Mr. Cobham early to come up and see the Sultan of Johore waving his handkerchief to us from on board the *Messageries*

boat. He turned out eagerly and came on deck, and heard it was the 1st of April.

We hunted up new clothes to wear, and bragged of them, but things we had not yet worn had become rare with us. We tried turning the faded side in, but this was pronounced to be shabby and a subterfuge. We put on our Siamese hats.

The Duke had a showy blue tie, quite ~~dark~~ and neatly hemmed, bought at Colombo; but then he was a duke, and it is fitting that a duke should be grand. We had a fine turkey for dinner; we had watched his fattening with interest, and we sang Easter hymns in the saloon in the evening, with Mr. Butters, Herries, the second cook, Charlie, and one or two others to swell the chorus. Weather permitting, the Duke always likes to have hymns on a Sunday evening; the hymns for Hospitals and for Those at Sea from 'Hymns Ancient and Modern' always conclude the singing, winding up with his own favourite, that dreary, funeral hymn, No. 289, 'Days and moments quickly flying.'

The Southern Cross is bright to-night, the moon rising late. I now see that the Southern Cross is really a finer constellation than the two other pseudo crosses on the right and left of it, which bring to mind so vividly the three crosses of Calvary. The sky is full of lightning, the sea of phosphorescence, among which the porpoises are illuminated as if in lambent flame.

On the 3rd of April a beautiful white gull from Socotra, Africa, or Arabia, tells us we are approaching land. This is fortunate, as our eggs are getting

stale ; we have eaten the last of the fish, and when the ice fails good-bye to the rest of our provisions.

We passed Socotra in the night,

‘Socotra, which doth bitter aloes boast,’

but we still made out the lofty island in the mists to the starboard as we came on deck. The ‘Brothers’ islands were near us.

‘That isle might well be one of the Greek islands,’ says the Duke, spying at the lofty, dim and distant isle.

We are to see Cape Guardafui this afternoon. How near home we seem now that we can almost lay hold of Africa ! We made a good run of two hundred and thirty-nine knots in the twenty-four hours. Thermometer eighty-six in the deck-house at breakfast and ninety-two at dinner.

On the 6th of April we were called early to see the rocks near Aden. They are very wild and grand ; others thought the same, for the accordion-player tuned up with ‘They’re all very fine and large,’ and played soothingly until called on to help drop the anchor.

General Hogg, the governor, came off and invited us to stay at Government House while the yacht was coaling. We accepted gratefully ; we felt such a longing to set foot on terra-cotta, as we correctly called this baked and parched Aden. We were thirsty for news.

There had been no fight between the Italians and Abyssinians, and peace was being talked of. Though the promised shops were in some measure a delusion, few places have progressed in the course

of the Queen's jubilee so much as Aden ; at any rate, as regards population. The number of inhabitants was six hundred in 1837 ; ten thousand in 1859 ; in 1888, with Socotra, forty thousand. Socotra has a population of four thousand. Nothing is manufactured in Aden except salt and water ; condensing the sea-water and dividing the salt from it.

Mr. Cobham and I took an open carriage and drove to the ancient tanks, called after the Queen of Sheba, up the long road, or volcanic mud-jane by the sea ; then up to the fort where the road hewn through the rocks is crowned by an archway, and tunnelled underneath the fortified rugged mountain ; then down to the Arab town of Aden, invisible from the harbour side of the settlement : a thoroughly oriental populous town built in the crater of the extinct volcano. Near this an avenue of starveling tropical shrub leads to the Jubilee arch, erected over the entrance to the enclosure of the tanks, set in wildest scenery of lofty precipitous crags and mountain peaks, down whose fissures flows every trickle of rain-water when it falls, which is seldom : gathering it in rills to the tanks which are thus filled in three hours when it does rain.

There are two tanks connected by a sort of bridge, and there are paved terraces with railings round about the tanks at different levels ; thence pathways led up among the stern grey precipices themselves, rising seventeen hundred and seventy-five feet high, and away into the roads beyond. The tanks are enclosed in the plantation, which is as much of a garden as the arid and scorching

situation will allow. These tanks are said to be capable of containing between eight and twelve millions of gallons of water. The water was low at the time of our visit, as rain had not fallen for many months.

The Governor in speaking jokingly of his poor little plantation, for which earth had to be brought from Socotra, as there is hardly a spoonful of earth naturally in Aden, said it had already made some difference in the climate, for whereas rain used only to fall once in two years now it falls as often as twice in three years : the percentage of difference, when one thinks of it, is considerable. Once in every two or three years five inches of rain will fall in one day, and then the tanks are filled. As the other water of the place, with the exception of two good wells, is mostly brackish, condensers are constantly at work producing the main supply. All the water is carried up to Government House in skins by bheesties. This is why it is so warm in the baths. These tanks, with the surrounding shrubbery and shaded seats, make a pleasant resort for the Adenites in their evening walks ; but we could not stay long to enjoy it, as it was getting dark, and we had three quarters-of-an-hour's drive back.

The mountains looked very weird in the dusk, their gloom contrasting with the many-lanterned and busy Arab town of Aden, with dark figures in all hues of oriental costume flitting about among the flaring links and lanterns of the street stalls, the fiery sunset glow still touching the surrounding grey fantastic crests with flame. The town lies so

completely in a basin, that all round it rise these rigid sentinels of the natural rocky fortification. This ancient city was formerly, in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, a great centre of trade between the east and west. Green sandstone is the principal building material. It was pitch-dark before we got back to Government House, which is situated on a hill on the opposite side of the rocky peninsula. We were guided in our drive by the oil lamps placed at regular intervals along the shore road. The bungalow looked very cheery and comfortable, as we arrived from the outer darkness, with its yellow pillared vestibule and abundant colour of rugs and pictures; an agreeable mingling in the furniture of the colouring of the east, and the comfort of the west. I was given a nice large room with bath-room, dressing-room, and shaded verandah to lounge in.

We were a pleasant little party of ten at dinner; but in the midst of dinner a telegram was brought to the General that young Mr. Ingram, who had lately started from here with a shooting-party in highest health and spirits, had been killed by a furious rogue-elephant on the Somali coast. This sad news cast a gloom over the evening.

We amused ourselves, before the ten o'clock breakfast, with looking through General Hogg's masterly and interesting sketches of Aden, Socotra, and elsewhere, and chatting with a general officer and his daughter just arrived from India in a mail steamer, during whose stoppage of a few hours they came up to see their old friend the Governor of

Aden. Such visits as these are constant, and certainly do alleviate what would otherwise be a terrible banishment in a scorching climate.

The General kindly caused ostrich feathers, boas, baskets, curtains, Persian carpets, &c., to be brought up to Government House for us to see, and we made several purchases in this delightfully easy manner. The patterns of Persian carpets are made irregular as a defence against the evil eye; as Chinese city gates are built in a curve or zigzag in order that the evil spirits may not enter. These spirits can only move in a straight line. This may be the origin of the promiscuous character of Japanese ornamentation. There is a good deal of trade between Aden and the Persian Gulf.

I walked down the cliff paths to the beach, formed in great measure of broken coral, to collect shells, when the sun went down sufficiently to make investigation tolerable. As I took the shells out of my pocket on my return some of them walked away, rather startling me: they had a sort of hermit crabs inside. A great variety of shells come abundantly into Aden from May to September with the south-west monsoon.

A dinner-party of twenty-five was given this day in honour of the Duke; the dining-room cooled by punkahs and large, coloured palm-leaf fans. There was a dance afterwards, with a good many ladies, most of them pretty young married women. The army officers wear white linen round jackets, with broad red or blue silk waistbands, and white trousers. This looks very nice in a ball-room, and sets off

the ladies' dresses, which are very often of black lace, to advantage, more so than do the scarlet uniforms.

The band played loudly but well for the dancing ; the ball closing just before midnight, as it was Saturday, with 'God save the Queen.'

It is a drive of eight miles to the camp. The struggle for carriages went on for some time after we had retired to our rooms. Everything was audible through the cane-trellised verandahs, faced with matting. There are plenty of parties, sports, races, &c., given in Aden, as alleviations of life ; alleviations only too necessary in a station where the mean temperature of the hot weather is 96° , and the mean of the cold weather 82° .

The promontory of Aden is connected with the mainland of Arabia by a low, sandy isthmus, beyond which one sees the arid chain of hills of Yemen. In 1858, this isthmus was between two and three hundred yards wide ; but, in 1808, it was covered at each spring-tide, this being one of the instances of recession of water from the Arabian coast. Aden has experienced many vicissitudes, fluctuating with the rise and fall of adjacent countries. It may be considered an eastern Gibraltar, and is yearly rising in importance and usefulness. The remains of its ancient defences proclaim of what importance this place has been.

It is naturally a very strong place, and rifles and heavy guns on its numerous ridges and cones would keep an enemy at bay, who would find no shelter, nor means for counter-works. The camp at Aden

is situated on some table-land above the sea-level, and surrounded by the irregular mountains, near the gate which commands the passage to the mainland. Few of the officers are kept here longer than a year.

The Arabian export trade in coffee is mostly from Aden, Mocha having dwindled into a mere name. Numerous articles of the *materia medica* are exported from here. Fever prevails at the changes of the seasons, principally *quotidian* intermittent. Small-pox and scurvy are the chief diseases of Aden, though no scurvy appears in the jail, unless when it takes the intensified form of the allied disease called beriberi. For an Asiatic station, it is considered uniformly healthy for Europeans. Phthisis is very rare, but patients who have come here for the change have mostly died. No vegetables are grown in Aden, and its flora is limited and meagre; it is principally dependant on the mainland of Arabia and on Bombay for its supplies. Amongst the quadrupeds at Aden are those of burthen, of food, scavengers, and the usual companions of civilization. The horse, the ox, sheep and goats, camels and dromedaries. The sheep have large tails and drooping ears. Foxes and hyenas roam the hills; the foxes are of silvery colour. Dogs, cats, and rats are very numerous, and, I have heard, do not molest one another! Various kinds of kites are seen on the look-out for offal, and gulls of small size skim the water; poultry is plentiful in the market. Of edible fish there is a great variety, plentiful, and fairly good. There are crabs,

rock-oysters, and crawfish. The reptiles here are lizards and some snakes. The wood here used as fuel is the potash plant or 'lana.'

From Arabia is procured 'gowaree,' a cereal largely consumed by the natives, and on which horses are fed. It is as highly stimulating as wheat. The native population is said to be the refuse of India and Africa. The Somali men are generally very tall. The Jews at Aden appear the most degenerate of the brotherhood; they are the street-hawkers of ostrich feathers.

We greatly enjoyed our three days' refreshment at Aden. We left on Sunday at noon, the Governor coming off to the yacht with us, and saying 'Good-bye' as we raised our anchor. A pleasant, genial man, and a capital host. His cheerfulness in the monotony of a station of this sort, where his vice-regal position only renders him the more lonely, is a proof of the value of such a resource as sketching; it fills his solitude with such interest, and his excursions to the mainland have a double charm. As the Governor sits at his desk doing his official writing, he is fanned the while by a tall black servant in white, flowing drapery, with a very large painted palm-leaf fan. This tall Somali, seen against the large white columns of the room, is a perfect picture. We enjoyed a finely-clouded sunset over the chain of the Arabian hills of the Mocha coast, in all tones of grey and purple on the craggy mountains, these looking like waves petrified in the act of breaking, but very lofty as they rose one behind the other in what seemed an infinity of mountain desert. Arab dhows

sailing by us, with their broad lateen-sails touched blood-red with the sun.

The islands of Zukur and Zubayir, with a chain of islets between them, were our next scenery, as night made us miss the Straits of Babelmandeb, with fortified Perim. The whole of the sea round the yacht was enlivened by an immense shoal of sharp-nosed dolphins of all sizes, leaping and bounding, mostly in pairs, leaping out of a wave together, in the blue freshening sea. They all fled before a cast of Mr. Butters' harpoon. The dolphins came again next day, in the roughish sea, but not in quite such large numbers. Again they fled before the harpoons.

The tamest of sunsets for our last night in the tropics; sky warm grey, sea cool grey; only this, only this. A popular fallacy indeed is that legend of the gorgeous sunsets of the East. Colour abides in the northern skies. The Southern Cross still well above the horizon in a misty calm. Longer twilight now, I could read till nearly seven o'clock.

On the following evening we passed close to St. John's Island, on the Tropic of Cancer, and another islet, a steep and a flat holm, and behind them the mountains of Berenice in Africa. I could only see three stars of the Southern Cross to-night: it was like quitting a friend. The wind rose suddenly as we entered the Gulf of Suez, and we could see neither coast. It often rushes violently down the ravines of the Gulf of Akabah. Old Indians returning home call this breeze the morning and evening doctor. The sea grew rough and a sand-storm filled

in both horizons ; we only heard the hissing of the waves as the cold wind rose, and we put on speed to get into port the sooner. Lo, the storm as suddenly cleared and the waves at once began to fall, and they laid the dinner-table without the fiddles. Evening cast a rich plum-coloured bloom over the Egyptian mountains bathed in a solemn splendour of tawny sunset all subdued and very harmonious. We had several of these sudden squalls and changes in going up the Gulf of Suez, but at no time could we get a glimpse of the Arabian coast and Mount Horeb. The thermometer stood at 72° at the warm end of the deck-house, and we put on warmer dresses, putting away what Herries called our 'valuable dresses all of mosquito curtain.'

Oh, the packing for Cairo and the packing-cases !

'I've been thinking that them's some of his Grace's coats,' sighs pensive Chippy, wondering which packing-cases he had to screw down for England, and what we wanted to eat, drink, and wear.

A red buoy not marked in the chart puzzles our navigators. It turns out to be adrift ; we must report it at Suez.

We stayed over Sunday at Suez, anchored opposite a square building that we called Stafford House. The sea a glorious colour, azure, violet, and peacock-green. Since we were here they have called one of their donkeys Duke of Sutherland, and one after Lord Stafford.

'Is that a compliment ?' we asked.

'They meant it kindly,' said Herries, seriously.

Rupee meets florin at Suez: the same sized coin, but what a difference in the nominal value!

We went to Cairo by train, the yacht being sent through the canal to meet us at Alexandria. Siam's streets shine compared with those of Suez; and the Siamese people are much more cleanly. The Suez people look as if they had never been taught to wash, not even in sand.

Dazzling desert bounded by the blue belt of canal, the Bitter Lakes intensely sapphire in their setting of burning sand; with here and there a few dark palm-trees, and by them shadoofs at work; the mirage making April fools of us on the other side. Malay houses are far superior to these sand-hovels; but how far better than the Wat Sakhét and cremation-grounds is the tiny neat cemetery where the rude forefathers of the mud hamlet sleep. Ismailia junction and patches of yellow barley increasing in size and number. Is it cemetery or ruins that we see at Tel-el-Kebir? It is the ruins of houses, with the square window openings left. There is a neat large cemetery outside.

Wherever the desert is eaten away into a depression there is moisture at once and palms spring up. The desert is always higher in level than the cultivated plain. There is water hereabout, and black earth with rich, varied cultivation and cattle and buffaloes. White ibises are seen in flocks; palms and sycamore, terebinth and caroub-trees, and ripening harvests; flax cut and laid in rows to soak; emerald verdure of 'persim' in fields and vegetables grass-packed in crates at the stations

cogged water-wheels with strings of jars; white-domed welys and mud-hovels, some square, some beehive-shaped.

Zagazig has much increased since I was here before. It is quite a large town with pretty minarets. Red fezzes are universally worn, and costumes varied in fashion and fulness, but all the upper garments are cut V-shaped in front, whether white or blue shirt or black abba.

For all the round mud-hovels and the rubbish-heaped roofs to the square ones, Egypt looks more prosperous and happy, less ground down than in the days of Ismail. The Zagazig cemetery is in a desert patch. Here the patches only are desert, oases or islets of desert. The Pyramids! Though forty centuries look down upon us, bunches of roses, ever fresh, pink and young, are given to us. As the Indian song says: 'Tazch b'tazeh. No beh no.' ('Fresh and fresh, new and new').

Here are lateen sails on the Nile, and here is Mr. Wright, the Duke's secretary, with the courier to welcome us. We drive to Shepherd's Hotel. It feels like being at home again. The Duke is hailed by a friendly voice (slapped on the back really).

'How are you, dear old fellow?'

'You here, Charlie! Dine with us.'

'I will.'

Yes, indeed, we are next door to home. This is the Earl of D—. He is jolly, and entertains us with European talk and cheery stories at dinner in the Duke's private sitting-room, filled with bowls of Marshal Niel roses. It is quite the season of

roses here ; we shall follow the roses all the way home.

Lord D—— told us with great spirit of how Val Baker Pasha went off with him once on a long chase ; General Baker's object being to 'catch Sam' (Sir Samuel) on his way to the south ; and how they gave chase and at length succeeded in 'catching Sam.'

There was plenty of the latest English news to tell, and it made it all the pleasanter hearing it well told.

CHAPTER XIV.

EGYPT.

Fool ! why journeyest thou wearisomely, in thy antiquarian fervour, to gaze on the stone pyramids of Geeza, or the clay ones of Sacchara ? These stand there, as I can tell thee, idle and inert, looking over the desert, foolishly enough, for the last three thousand years : but canst thou not open thy Hebrew BIBLE, then, or even Luther's version thereof ?

Sartor Resartus.

CAIRO to-day is like an oriental Paris in miniature in this new Frenchified quarter. The long Boulevard Mehemet Ali now leads to the old, familiar citadel, where the fresh-faced English sentries and civil non-commissioned officers are a symbol of the best security for the continued tranquillity of Egypt. We gazed on the view of the pyramids from the saluting battery, and the closely-packed, crowded city roofs, and the domes of the city of the dead caliphs in the desert. It is a tradition that the pyramids were built in an apprehension of the destruction of the city of Memphis by inundation, that some day a great wave of overflow must come from the Nile. How closely past and present are linked in the view from the battery ; the distant pyramids, invested with all the poetry of mystery and all the teeming associations of Napoleon's forty centuries, and a cannon, and the telegraph in the foreground.

It is pleasant to see the English soldiers up here in the citadel, and little English boys playing cricket after a fashion. This makes English domination in Egypt appear more an established fact than if there were many more regiments at a distance. The soldiers look healthy and in good spirits. The cheerful sight of these English soldiers on the citadel is the explanation, the true cause of the increased prosperity, happiness, and freedom of the fellahin. It is no imaginary improvement.

The Egyptian army is furnished with the Schneider rifle. The origin of this was thus: Ismail sent for Schneider to come to Cairo—meaning Madame Schneider the singer,—and sent her a ring. The telegraph people sent the telegram to Schneider the gun-maker, who came, expecting an order, but mystified about the ring. Ismail sent a message that if she would have a bath and refresh itself—this is a little mixed, but all the more natural to a German—that he would come and see her. The Khedive on beholding him—the bathed and refreshed gunmaker—was somewhat taken aback; but he felt obliged to give him an order for having had him over to Cairo.

The tall-walled mosque of Touloun and others are more crumbling than they were of old, but gladdening to the memory still. Nothing is ever repaired in Egypt, any more than in Siam. The labyrinth of bazaars are unchanged, the pyramids are changeless, so I need say no more about them; but the ostrich-farm was new to me, and it may be so to some of my readers. It is on the road to Heliopolis,

which road, beyond the barracks and the tamarisk-groves, planted to screen Cairo from desert invasion, is itself lined with villas and otherwise changed out of knowledge. We approach a narrow gate beyond a slight, frail bridge: it seemed as if our carriage must break it down, and precipitate us into the ditch filled with bricks made of the Nile mud below. Here is the entrée to the farm, admission two shillings each person. This is entirely an Egyptian concern, managed and worked by natives. There are ostriches six months old in the first pen, these are still chickens. Those in the second pen, at seven months old, look full-grown, but they are not plucked; these are for the most part black ostriches with white points. Then comes a pen of four-year-old birds. These plucked birds have a very comical appearance, but they look healthy and no less comfortable than shorn sheep. A very few short feathers are left on. The birds are fed on biscuit something like ship's biscuit, the empty tins of which are piled hard by. Our pockets were filled with this hard biscuit, with which we fed a pen of three months' old chickens, and then we mounted to the gazabo, a sort of master's eye, commanding a view of the whole farm—a useful notion for most farms—and the view round Matarieh and Heliopolis. On the desert side two camels with their drivers were walking away to Suez, a dreary march. The river, or palm-tree side of the view is more cheerful, with its domes, minarets, and village roofs half hidden away among the palm-trees, and here and there the bend of a lateen sail by which one traces the line of the

Nile. The obelisk of Heliopolis is concealed by clumps of trees. The Egyptian palm-trees look coarse and clumsy after the cocos and the slender graceful arecas. The date palm stems here look like stone rather than fresh vegetable stalks, they are so dusty.

Then we were shown the incubating house, kept warm, but there is no thermometer to measure the temperature. The eggs take forty-five days to hatch, in drawers above a hot-water tank. 'Water ver' hot, nearly boil water,' but they could not tell the precise temperature. The eggs felt warm to the hand. In a dark door there is a hole cut for testing the eggs, which should look translucent and of a clear apricot colour; the bad eggs are clouded or opaque. Two hundred chickens are hatched here every year. The bad eggs are blown and sold at four shillings each. They keep the pens all dry and sandy. Ostriches live in the desert, so they make it like the desert, which is easy enough here.

The stock of three hundred birds consumes twenty boxes of biscuit a day at one shilling a box, less than one penny a day for each bird. Each ostrich thus costs about thirty shillings a year to feed. I did not hear of their being fed on iron nails, buttons, and general rubbish to invigorate their digestions.

The produce of each bird is one oke or two pounds and three-quarters, valued at twenty-five pounds sterling each bird. The profits seem large, but we do not know what risks there are; we could

hear of none, and the market seems pretty steady. Few people seem to be employed, and wages are not high ; nor can rent be high at that distance out of Cairo, for it is only desert or nearly worthless land ; the plant is not expensive, nor the farm-buildings costly.

They have an office on the farm where feathers are sold, very shabby ones at 'two bob' apiece. We thought of the beauties we bought at Aden and Massowah, and scorned these specimens, and despised a few dyed, dressed, and expensive plumes on the counter. I suppose the good crop is all sold to the regular merchants, and it is chiefly a wholesale business. The Virgin Mary's Tree and the obelisk of Heliopolis were familiar to all of us.

The Boulak Museum has been greatly enlarged of late years ; it contains an extremely fine collection of Egyptian antiquities. Most enjoyable is it to sit awhile in its garden, among the silent statues by the Nile with its lateen sails and palm-fringed banks.

Here we regretfully said good-bye to Mr. Cobham, who now left us for his government at Cyprus. He had been a pleasant companion, and, besides being an accomplished agreeable man, he was always a walking guide-book among the works of art and the architectural objects of interest in the towns.

We had several cloudy and even showery days during the week we stayed in Cairo, and, though late in April, it was chilly. We went out bazaaring a good deal, and enjoying the fun of donkey-back. The Duke is cut out of the shopping, for, as Lord D—— says, 'If "Staf" came, it would spoil all the

bargains.' An earl would seem next door to a duke to be overcharged, but Lord D—— says they tried on with him at first and now they find it is no use. Besides, he speaks Arabic too well, that is, their sort of Arabic. However, the Duke beat us all in the end, for Parvis, at the great curiosity-and-cabinet-work shop, (that is tucked away behind the butcher's bazaar and the fruit-market) gave his Grace a fine baksheesh. He admired a vase. 'It is yours,' said Parvis, and had it put in a packing-casc immediately along with the things the Duke had bought.

We came home to put down our things, and then the whole staff went off in a procession of three carriages to see the twirling dervishes, a curious performance. A dozen-and-a-half or so of men in white full skirts, white cloth jackets and tall white felt tarbooshes, twirled with arms extended, the right palm turned up, the left hand turned down. One of them had a most comically sanctified expression as he leaned his head on one side and turned up his eyes, the others were more business-like. A few twirled in the centre and the rest twirled round them, two priests in black keeping the outer circle filled evenly at regular intervals. Then the dervishes crossed their arms over their breasts and bowed, an aged priest in a brown dress and blueish turban intoning some verses of the Koran and keeping time: they walked past him and then began to twirl as before; this was repeated several times. The ladies of the harem looked on from a latticed gallery above, and music of tom-toms and fifes went on in another gallery.

One can only conjecture meanings for this curious ceremony, and wonder if David's dancing before the ark was anything like this. To think that this has been going on every Friday for centuries in Moslem lands is a great mystery.

After staying here a short while, we left this round mosque, through the walled and vine-trellised passages by which we had entered, and drove on a long way in the outskirts of the city to see the howling dervishes, a still more extraordinary performance. Seats were set for us round a floor of matting on which was laid a circle of sheep-skins, brown and white. At first there were but few dervishes, uttering prayers and cries, calling on the name of Allah, and making swaying movements, but their number increased gradually to about two dozen, surrounding a priest in a long white cloth garment, a very good-looking man, who chiefly stood in front of what might be called the 'mirhab,' or holy place. Many of the dervishes had green turbans; most of them, but by no means all, looked as if they lived on charity. There were many movements of the performance, each one as it proceeded being worked up to a rapid and excited pitch. Loud breathings, uttered first to the right hand then to the left, getting louder and more stertorous as the men were urged on by the priest in the centre, or by an elder who sometimes took his place. Another priest in white chanted verses from the Koran in a wild shrill cadence of roulades and jackal-like utterances, to which the circle of dervishes either groaned, or roared, or harshly

whispered a burden of accompaniment interspersed with shouts, yells or shrieks, many of these coming from some quite small boys who also worked busily in the dervish circle. Then the men divested themselves of their upper garments, which were received by an elder who laid them aside ; they let down their shaggy hair from under their turbans—some of the dervishes wore it quite long like women. Most of them took off their turbans or tarbooshes and gave them to the elder, retaining the white skull-cap, others having only their shaggy hair, which they tossed wildly backwards and then forwards over their faces in the energetic succession of deep bowings, groaning meanwhile, or making unearthly sounds in all manner of wild play with the lungs. One beggar-dervish, looking like a maniac, was frightfully active ; a young man in sulphur-coloured silk garment looked as if he must become insensible with his exertions ; some of them took no such trouble, but one wild creature in a striped gown when on the point of having a fit, was supported in his place by those on either side of him.

I never saw any act of worship or form of devotional ceremonial half so extraordinary as this. Tambours, cymbals, and tom-toms were played to encourage the men to yet wilder frenzy ; then, at the moment when it seemed they must drop or die, the whole movement would suddenly cease. One very curious movement was swaying sideways to a succession of tones sung or howled in a chromatic scale, closing, when they could shriek no higher, with a wild scream. At the close of all, the chief

priest put on a black gaberdine instead of or over his white one, and he gave them the kiss of peace or else shook their hands, which they kissed and raised to their foreheads ; then they, and we all, departed, baksheesh being given at the doors by the various couriers and dragomans of the spectators.

Extremes meet : perhaps the nearest thing I have seen to the performance of the howling dervishes is Signor D——'s pianoforte playing. Swing, swing, up and down, thump, thump perpetually ; like chopping suet. When human nature could hold out no longer, the audience clapped and—encored him.

We climbed to our carriages up the broken road deep in the dust of demolitions, for they are constructing a new quarter here, and hills of cut chaff quarried for the food of horses and donkeys. We drove to the hotel to lunch, rest, and wash before going to the races, which are very like races elsewhere. It is a capital race-course at Gezireh. Lord D—— was very busy on the ground as starter, &c., and a lot of celebrities came to chat with us, including Mr. Cope Whitehouse, the inventor of the Libyan lake scheme for irrigating the entire area of cultivatable land in the Nile valley and the Delta.

He has discovered a deep depression in the desert, which, he said, would make a lake with a surface considerably larger than the Lake of Geneva, and two hundred and fifty feet deep. This he proposes to fill from the enormous excess of the Nile which, even in the worst seasons, escapes into the sea, and which, if stored, would fertilize a quantity of land only partially and occasionally cultivated, or wholly

neglected, amounting to over three millionacres.

He explained to us his scheme for forming a lake and canal, or river with sluice-gates, in the Libyan desert, to fill the lake when there is a very high Nile, and to supply Egypt with water for irrigation when there is a very low one. There will be reserve force no end for electrical purposes, and every possible benefit to the country. The enthusiastic projector carries one away with his beliefs, if not by his arguments, almost as much as Jules Verne does. Many gentlemen we spoke to think Mr. Whitehouse's scheme quite feasible, but they prefer to think of drainage before any new irrigation proposal.

The following may give an idea of Egyptian morals. An Egyptian gentleman of high position was turned out of the English club in Cairo for cheating at cards ; he had a card up his sleeve. The Egyptians only said, ' Poor fellow, perhaps he could not have won in any other way.' Robbing the public by embezzling shareholders' money is still more easily excused.

I went alone to the mosque of Mehemet Ali, and, alas ! destroyed an illusion I seemed to remember of translucent golden colour and warm light most exquisite. The lofty dome, large carpets, and clear glass lamps are still striking, but there is no high art, and where is the luminous golden glow ? Lost with my own youth and youth's wonderment, I suppose.. Moral: Beware how you return to look upon a remembered loveliness. You will lose it for ever. It is only things of the highest beauty that will stand this test !

We daily had Nubar Pasha or other notabilities

about us or dining with us. The Khedive himself called while his Grace was out. He offers his own vice-regal saloon for the Duke and his party to travel in. We are invited to lunch on board the Peninsular and Oriental steamer *Gwalior* on our arrival at Alexandria on Monday morning.

On Sunday I went to the pretty English church here. The Duke tells me he laid the foundation-stone of this church a good many years ago.

The shops near here, and many others, are shut, and there is generally a nice Sundayified feeling about Cairo. The manager and the visitors' servants in the hotel sit under the trees and awnings, and in the open vestibule in front of the hotel. The lower shrubs in the garden are coated, almost caked, with dust, but the bright green acacias and other leaves, reared high above the dust's influence, are fresh and beautiful. Most people are out driving. The street carriages almost all have pairs of horses; the khavasses still dress in Greek costume, with white, flowing sleeves and full white flowing skirts.

I am glad Lord D—— is to accompany us to Alexandria, he is so full of fun.

Luigi, the manager, was just now scoffing at Lord D——'s portmanteau. 'What a shabby box, just like a German governess's!' He turned, and there was Lord D—— laughing over his shoulder. Luigi was the most discomfited of the twain.

Nubar Pasha was at the station to see the Duke off, and Monsieur Salandino, the banker, gave us ladies large and lovely bouquets of roses.

Our grandeur makes the villages of brown huts

with palm-trees like brooms sticking up in them seem all the poorer ; but there are orchards and ripe corn, and these people have always the wealth of a golden land and sapphire sky. Alas ! for our own poor cockneys !

Of course we, in our select isolation, have no chance of doing more than look upon the Alexandrian belles and the dark-eyed women, with their black veils and blue outer dresses, who flutter about the stations, and hear what life in general has to show in the other portions of the train. We, on our 'pedestal where we grow marble,' can only hear and see the outside laughter and the fun of travel —without participation. The Duke himself sometimes gets a bit of amusement out of travelling. Once, as he was standing on the door-step of his own saloon-carriage at the station, a baginan sauntered up, and entered into chat.

' Nice carriage this. Whose is it ?'

' Mine,' said his Grace, naturally.

' Gammon !' said the questioner, laconically.

You see, the Duke had not got his stars and garters off.

The fellahs preferred the old way of being taxed according to their crops, rather than our plan of an equal annual taxation. Our way is best for the land and for the revenue, but not so favourable to their laziness. Egypt is still what it was in Joseph's time, a great corn-field and onion-bed. It is enlivened by white ibises, yoked buffaloes, camels in strings, cows, asses, grey-backed crows and blue-gowned labourers. There is a great fair at Tantah.

'These Zouaves in light blue, with yellow trimmings and red fezzes, are General Baker's men,' said Lord D——; 'and here is Said Pasha's bridge, that he had cut and then sent a carriage-load of his obnoxious relations over it, and tumbled them into the river.'

The Duke (who loves machinery of all sorts) justifies the use of these steam water-wheels against all our claimour of 'But where is the picturesque? Where the immemorial past?' These light, airy things are being dusted out by utilitarian civilization, as they dusted out this railway-carriage with feather-brooms. But the bee-hive and manure-roofed hovels still remain as unsavoury as ever, neither swept out nor swept away.

Damanhoor is a big, populous place; a fair is going on here too. The pomegranate-trees are in blossom, and plantains grow, though shabby and blown to ribbons by the high wind. There are tall bulrushes, like those of Moses' cradle by the Nile, and lotuses on the Mahmoudieh canal; and here is Lake Mareotis, with white sails gliding along its mirage-like surface. We drive through the handsomely re-built streets of Alexandria. The houses remind one of Paris; showing the recuperative power of a commanding situation. See Alexandria to-day, thrice regenerated and prosperous still, notwithstanding the deviation of trade from the Nile to the Suez Canal.

We were taken to lunch on board the *Gwalior*, and the Peninsular and Oriental Company's agent sent baskets of beautiful flowers for the yacht. The

Gwalior set sail for Venice immediately after we left.

We drove out to see Mr. Cornish's pump-works for supplying Alexandria with fresh water from the Nile by the Mahmoudieh canal, which joins the Rosetta branch of the Nile at Atfeh, forty-five miles distant. They bring the water from thirty feet below the surface at the works, which are situated on the brick-baked sand-hills outside the city, where Alexandria lies enveloped, one might say buried, in her history. Twenty thousand tons of water are raised in the twenty-four hours. These works supply the city with high-service, after filtering it. The water is filtered through washed sea-sand in two filter-beds, a sort of cradles, set in banks clothed with *mesembrianthemum* and aloes, and shaded by palm-trees. They keep one filter-bed full during nine days, and then go to the other dry filter-bed, which has been cleansed meanwhile. The sand is washed and used again. There is a very marked difference between the dirty and the cleansed heaps of sand. The sand-washing machine is simple: a zinc barrow, a cylinder of wire-netting, and an Archimedean screw below. The clean sand is delivered up a shoot, backed with matting, into the waggons again, on the same principle as elevators for hay, &c. There is a large mud deposit from the sand. Mr. Royle, author of 'The Egyptian Campaigns, 1882 to 1885,' whom we met on several occasions, and who dined with us on board the *Sans Peur*, gave us several interesting facts concerning Mr. Cornish and his water-works.

The water supply of Alexandria, after the bombardment, began to be a source of anxiety. It came from the Mahmoudieh canal, adjoining the position taken by Arabi at Kafr Dowar. Throughout the bombardment, and subsequently, the town had been abundantly supplied by the efforts of Mr. Cornish. When, previous to the bombardment, all his countrymen and the great mass of Europeans sought safety afloat, he refused to desert his post. He contrived an elaborate system of defence for the water-works. It comprised an arrangement for throwing jets of steam at any possible band of assailants, as well as a line of dynamite bombs, capable of being exploded by means of electricity. The upper part of the engine-house was converted into a kind of arsenal, into which he and his men could retire as a last resort, and where rifles and ammunition were in readiness.

During the bombardment, the works happily escaped injury.

On the morning of the 11th of July, 1882, the day of the bombardment, Mr. Cornish visited the auxiliary pumping-station on the canal, more than a mile distant, as usual. From the roof of the engine-house, Mr. Cornish and his companions (nine Europeans in all) watched the progress of the bombardment, until the shot and shell, which whistled overhead, from the vessels firing on Fort Pharos, compelled them to descend. Meanwhile, the pumps were kept working as in ordinary times.

On the afternoon of the 12th, when the mob of rioters, who, with their petroleum, etc., did the

whole of the damage that devastated the actual town of Alexandria, left off for the time their work of destruction and quitted the town, the majority of them passed a few yards from the works, and indulged in curses and execrations at the 'Christian dogs' within.

With humane forethought, two large jars of water were placed in front of the gate and kept supplied from within. Thousands of thirsty natives coming from the dust and smoke of the town stopped to drink, and, after cursing Mr. Cornish, passed on.

To whatever cause it may be attributed, no attack was made on the works, and their courageous director survived to receive the congratulations of the Khedive and of his own countrymen. Mr. Cornish had the decoration of C.M.G. conferred on him for his own conduct on this occasion. By-and-by Arabi made a dam by which all further flow of the Nile was stopped, and on the 21st of July Arabi caused salt water to be let into the Mahmoudieh canal by cutting the dam separating it from Lake Mareotis, thereby considerably aggravating the difficulty of the water supply. Mr. Cornish held his own, notwithstanding, and condensed the water, and they—I do not exactly know who, but some authority who had the means—gave Mr. Cornish a thousand pounds and a decoration for staying at his post during the war and supplying the town and the army with water.

The ruins of Alexandria were shown us in photographs, and we had seen enough of the ruins still quaking and looking ghastly even in the Place des

Consuls to be sure that the pictures were not exaggerated. There are Bedouin tents just outside the fortifications on the hardened sand-hills which are overgrown with a red sort of mesembrianthemum much used in making soap.

Alexandria is not unhealthy for English people, even their children are rosy and look thriving, and it is a good place for learning languages; children naturally pick up Arabic, Greek, and Italian, besides the French and German and other lessons that are paid for. Leaving the city at the Rosetta-gate, we drove on by the side of the Mahmoudich canal by way of the water-tunnel six feet below the road, which carries the water to the pumps. The opposite bank of the canal is lined with a nearly continuous Arab village, and beyond Lake Mareotis extends the boundless Sahara. The acacia (lebbek) trees here do not come into leaf until June, in Cairo they are green in April.

Bamboo grows here, but the stems are not large in diameter.

They are justly proud of Monsieur Antoniades' garden, notwithstanding the marble statues with which it is disfigured, of which they are prouder still. Here the bougainvillea is still in full bloom, though it is fading in Cairo, and has been over for many weeks in Suez. The Tunisian palm was a novelty to us in the way of palms, proud as we were of our knowledge of this subject. Roses, especially cluster-roses twining up the trees, bloom in delightful profusion in these gardens. A hundred and twenty men are employed to work these hundred and thirty

acres. (At Trentham forty men work twenty acres.)

At about ten minutes' walk beyond the farthest summer-house in the garden a Roman (or Greek) temple and tomb have lately been discovered.

We turned off in our return drive to see Pompey's Pillar. A Greek inscription upon it shows it was erected by Publius, prefect of Egypt, in 296 A.D., in honour of Diocletian. Its height altogether is one hundred feet, the diameter at the base ten feet. It is of red polished granite, though no one on seeing it would suspect it of polish any more than Cleopatra's needles, whose loss is now bewailed by the Alexandrians, who have few objects of interest left to attract visitors. This new quarter of Alexandria is built of stucco on stone. Here is a large German hospital, a branch of Kaiserswerth. We passed the large Jesuits' College, a new building erected on the site of something destroyed in the fire. One often sees brown-clothed Jesuits in the town. There is one wood-paved street in Alexandria, but mostly the streets are well-paved with large stone slabs. The population of Alexandria is two hundred and thirty thousand; that of Cairo four hundred and thirty-five thousand.

As we were going off to the *Sans Peur*, we heard the Khedive's hymn played at sunset from an Egyptian man-of-war, and then 'God save the Queen.' They began the 'Marseillaise,' and stopped abruptly, for no perceptible reason.

'Lord D——, full of his good stories as usual, told us a yarn of the *Little Western*, the open boat that

sailed across the Atlantic, how she was sighted by a British ship, a liner, which changed her own course and hailed her with benevolent intentions.

‘Wall, what can we do for you?’ calls out a cheeky Yankee shoemaker, the skipper of the *Little Western*; ‘do you want stores or a doctor?’

The British captain in a rage gave the order to his steersman never, never again to change their course unless for a ship on fire or actually sinking.

‘Lappy’ inspected the troops on shore, and swam back to the yacht again, with a sense of duty fulfilled. He knows how to amuse himself.

A wonderful supply of flowers was sent us by Mr. Chapman from his garden at Ramleh. The saloon of the *Sans Peur* was filled with roses, quite realizing Alma Tadema’s picture of Heliogabalus. Had we known of this picture, we might have arranged a tableau of the scene by letting down the awnings filled with roses. Bertha, Aleck, and Charlie were at their wits’ end to make garlands quickly enough, and, on looking at the dining-table, Herries severely said he supposed they meant his Grace’s guests only to have roses and lilies, and such-like salads for dinner.

‘A feast of roses is all very well,’ he growled; ‘but the chef has planned a different bill-of-fare for to-day.’

We wore as many roses as we could crowd on, button-holes at every button.

The Duke had his dinner-party in the saloon. We can use the saloon comfortably now in this cool

weather. Thermometer 68° in the saloon after dinner.

‘Sir Constantine—— Who did Herries say?’ whispered the Duke. ‘What is the white-haired gentleman’s name?’

‘It sounds like “dear old ducky,” but it is spelt Zerouacchi,’ said Lord D——, who knew everything.

We had our first strawberries-and-cream (23rd of April), and Aleck played the pipes, to the great enjoyment of some of the party, and the astonishment of others. Mr. Mc—— wished he could have Aleck to dine with him on shore.

‘What, as a commercial speculation?’ his Grace asks, in his half-serious yet quietly-humorous voice; and he relates how his piper McAlister, in his kilts, was once upon a time—at Berlin—taken for the British ambassador.

Lord D—— also played us several reels and pibrochs on the pipes.

We were invited to meet a party of Alexandrian celebrities and heroes of the war at luncheon at the club in the Place des Consuls. This club—on the first-floor above the bourse—has fine and very comfortable rooms for dinners, meetings, baccarat, whist, billiards, everything. The luncheon-table was, as usual here, smothered in flowers. We could hardly see the table-cloth for the fresh roses strewed about. We had the Alexandrian native oysters. The oyster-beds supplied from England have thriven here. The oysters are good, but not quite so delicate as English natives.

We drove out afterwards to Ramleh, a favourite sea-side place, where many of the merchants and

rich European inhabitants of Alexandria have their country houses. We walked in divers private gardens and on the beach gathering shells, and thinking of this place as delightful winter-quarters. It is a pleasant drive out here, but there are frequent trains to and from Ramleh.

As we rowed out again in the gig at sunset, the Egyptian evening hymn was played and 'God save the Queen,' and again the 'Marseillaise' stopped abruptly at the fourth bar as before. Wherefore?

'Perhaps they don't know any more,' was the Duke's very natural solution.

'Tell me about that Sicilian trip, and I'll write it down,' said Lady Clare to Lord D——; 'because I find, when a man has left, one forgets all he has ever said.'

'There's for you, Charlie,' says the Duke. Many a true word spoken in jest.

We had the charming prospect of Sicily before us on our way to England.

Lord D—— bought two of the amusing monkeys of one of the sailors. The rest of the men were pathetic over their frolicsome, taily cousins, as they salaamed their farewells.

'Good-bye, old fellows; that's the last you'll do for us,' said the sailors, mournfully.

The lively creatures had whiled away so many hours at sea. The parting was quite touching. All of us had some fruits, or nuts, or cakes to give them before they were put into a basket-cage covered with grass. Dear monkeys, they will get on better in Cairo than in London, even if they weathered the

Bay of Biscay. Only 'Lappy' did not regret them: they pulled his hair, and grinned at him, and he never understood their fun.

Another consignment of flowers came before we weighed anchor, at noon of the 25th. We have been 'bunched' as much as petted visitors are in America. The whole air breathed roses.

The fine, large harbour at Alexandria is bounded by a sandy, broken coast-line.

The steam was up, ready to whirl us off; the gig was manned, to carry Lord D—— on shore. Another farewell to an agreeable fellow-traveller. We consoled ourselves by thinking and tactlessly saying,

'Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.'

'Well, if you will quote Watts' hymns, I had better leave at once;' and Lord D—— ran down the steps into the gig.

Our handkerchiefs were out.—Farewell!

